

Women Employment in Nigerian Polytechnics and the Challenges of Gender Sensitivity: A Study of Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State of Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study investigated women employment in Nigerian Polytechnics and the challenges of gender sensitivity using as a case study, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, with particular focus on the academic staff. To achieve the objective of the study, a total of 650 structured questionnaires were randomly administered on the targeted staff of the Polytechnic. 580 questionnaires were returned and after data mining of the questionnaires due to inconsistency, omission and incomplete filling, a sample of 325 was taken for the research study. The study tested a hypothesis of no relationship between women employment and gender sensitivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, using the t-statistic with the help of statistical software known as SPSS version 16.0. The analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between employment and gender sensitivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi since $t_{cal}(87.41) > t_{tab}(2.31)$ at 5% critical level. This implies that employment in the polytechnic is gender bias in favour of males. This study therefore concluded that men are more in academic positions in Auchi Polytechnic than their female counterparts. It however recommended among others a government legislation that would guarantee gender equity in employment in our tertiary institutions in Nigeria.*

Keywords: *Discrimination, Employees, Gender, Inequality, Sensitivity, Subordination*

1. INTRODUCTION

All over the world, women have become the focus of international Programmes and conferences aimed at integrating them into the development process on an equal basis with men. In Nigeria, it has been observed that successive governments since the attainment of independence have not pursued an employment policy aimed at gender balance hence the female gender has suffered untold subordination and discrimination.

Nigeria is a signatory to key international instruments that protect women's right such as the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The 1999 constitution contains non-discrimination provisions, and Nigeria has a National Gender Policy that seeks to promote gender equity. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document also stresses the commitment to gender equity and expresses government's commitment to 30 percent representation for women where possible (APRM, 2008:118).

Higher education influences and is influenced by the culture in which it is embedded. It is shaped by society and it helps to shape society. According to African Peer Review Mechanism (2008), 'women make up 49.6 percent of the nation's total population, but their level of participation in governance and decision-making is below 5 percent'. Thus, the position of women in higher education cannot be treated in isolation from the general status of women in society and from the general aims of economic and social development. Therefore, lack of gender sensitivity has for a long time denied women of full development of their potentials thereby leading to their inability

to contribute to national development like their male counterparts. As women represent about one-half of the active population, they should be involved in this process of national development on an equal basis with men. This requires that women play critical roles as intellectuals, policy-makers, planners, decision-makers and as contributors to and beneficiaries of development.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In the world over, the polytechnic as one of the providers of tertiary education has remained the domain of men. There is therefore need for women perspectives to be infused into both the structure and process of polytechnic life. Comparatively, it is obvious that only very small percentage of women have acquired the level of education and confidence that is necessary for the attainment of purely academic positions in Nigerian polytechnics. Ironically, Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu, Edo State of Nigeria which is expected to play a proactive role in achieving the goals of equality of opportunity in the society, is itself facing the acute problem of gender inequality in respect of overall representation of women in academic positions in the system.

This trend has recently become of great concern to many who are agitating that women should be given the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to development and be part of policy-making bodies. To this end, women have become the focus of international programmes and conferences aimed at integrating them into the development process on an equal basis with men. Equality of career opportunities along gender lines must be an integral part of any strategy to promote long term development in Auchu Polytechnic and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria. To guarantee the full development of the polytechnics in the country, the polytechnics should address the existing gender inequities through employment policy that promote gender sensitivity.

To this end, the problem which this paper seeks to tackle is women employment in Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu and the challenges of gender sensitivity. Put differently, to examine the hindrances or factors that have militated against women in not attaining academic positions in Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu on equal basis with their male counterparts.

1.2 Objective of Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate whether Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu considers the need for gender equity in the employment of persons into academic positions. The paper is aimed at achieving the following specific objectives:

1. To determine whether Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu, Edo State of Nigeria takes into consideration the challenges of gender sensitivity in its employment into academic positions in the system.
2. To examine whether women's inability to acquire higher education, affect them in attaining academic positions on equal basis with their male counterparts in Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu, Edo State of Nigeria
3. To ascertain the level of performance of female academic staff in Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu, Edo State of Nigeria

1.3 Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant relationship between employment and gender sensitivity in Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu, Edo State of Nigeria
- 2) There is no significant relationship between gender balance consideration and recruitment of academic staff in Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu, Edo State of Nigeria
- 3) There is no significant relationship between performance and employment of female academic staff in Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu, Edo State of Nigeria

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in many ways. First, it will contribute meaningfully to the growing literature on gender studies, women empowerment and women's rights. The researcher would through this study contribute to existing knowledge in the area. Second, the study will equally be useful to the polytechnic management in promoting employment policy that will always ensure that everyone participates and contributes on equal basis to the development and relevance of the

polytechnics in Nigeria without being discriminated against on the basis of gender. Third, the study is also relevant in that it will further bring to fore the basis or justification of women agitations for women rights, women empowerment and the need to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent times, gender issues and women marginalization have remained on the front burner of every political discourse. Obviously, the agitation for the emancipation and total liberation of women across the world has attracted the interest of many scholars. The global attention which women subjugation has attracted led the United Nations in her Human Rights Declaration of 1948 to state her commitment to the goal of equal rights for men and women. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) affirmed the universal recognition of the inherent dignity, and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Sex and gender differences between men and women have been given historically as the basis for discrimination against women.

In Nigeria as in many other developing countries, the polytechnic education has always favoured men. The reason is that most females do not get higher education due to their uneducated parents, poor career guidance, early marriage and child bearing, ignorance, poverty and sex discrimination among others. According to Robert (2004), after almost five decades since Nigeria became an independent nation-state and some experiences with quota system and federal character, there can be absolutely no doubt about major gains in the opportunities that have become available to women and majority groups in the civil service. However, prejudice continued to exist as does the glass ceiling that limits women from enjoying truly equal opportunities in the Nigerian public service. To this end, Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu as part of the Nigerian public service is not an exception in terms of the gender imbalance in academic positions in the system.

Adeleke(2003) has observed that there is high inequality between men and women, thus creating a wide gap between them, both in political, economic, social and cultural sphere. She went further to state that women are not given equal opportunities as their male counterparts especially when it comes to job opportunities. According to Mordi et al (2010), the girl child in Nigeria is culturally expected to be on the home front, while the boy child is trained to work. A reversal of this role has not always been perceived as positive by the Nigerian society. The expectation is typical of high patriarchal societies such as Nigeria where the social relations and activities of Nigerian women are governed by patriarchal systems of socialization and cultural practices which favour the interests of men above those of women. Within the work milieu, access of women to leadership positions is often constrained by the societal perception of gender roles of men and women. However, it is important to note that as a result of difficult economic circumstances in which employment is scarce, there is a slow or slight shift in public perception of women attaining top positions (Mordi et al, 2010:5-25).

To Gendreau-Massaloux and Fave-Bonnet (1993) cited in Onokala and Onah(1998), in France, even though the numbers of teachers throughout the educational system has increased, the position of women within the university has gained little from these new waves of recruitment and that women on the proportion of the total number of staff get increasingly smaller as one moves up the educational hierarchy. In the same vein, Alele-Williams (1993) cited in Onokala and Onah(1998), observed that the University of Benin with 1,228 members of Senior Staff strength showed that all the 59 full professors are males while 35 associate professors included 31 males and only 4 females. In Auchu Polytechnic, out of a total number of 702 academic staff, 587 are males while only 115 are females(Directorate of Academic Planning of the Polytechnic, 2013).

Inability to acquire higher education is one factor that has militated against women in attaining academic positions in the polytechnics in Nigeria. According to APRM (2008:328), the students enrolment in the polytechnics/monotechnics in Nigeria for 2006/2007 academic year stood at 360,535. However, student enrolment ratio showed that male was 59% while female was 41%. Against this background, it is obvious that women academics in our tertiary institutions these days are among the privileged few women who have had access to higher education. In the words of

Maduewesi (2005:196), “thus they are ‘subjects’ and no longer ‘objects’. They are visible and can take decisions that can affect lives positively. They work in the same environment as men academics”.

According to Singh (2002) cited in Egunjobi (2009), “academic profession, like any other profession at the beginning of time was a single sex profession”. To Egunjobi (2009), women academics in Nigeria were denied maternity leave under the university law and in some cases, they were not allowed to get married or have children. Some women were even refused employment despite the fact that they were qualified because it was felt that the women would be destructive influence in the laboratory working in all male career. He however agreed that in the commonwealth nations, the situation of women in academics has improved. To him, the percentage of women employed as full academic staff ranges from highest of 50% in Jamaica to the least of 9.5% in Ghana, with a commonwealth average of 24%. The smallest percentage was found in Ghana 9.5%, Nigeria 13.6%, Tanzania 11.0%, Zambia 10.9% and Zimbabwe 9.8% all in Africa. For example, University of Ilorin also showed female/male ratio of 11.6% to 88.4% (Egunjobi, 2009). Auchu polytechnic, Auchu however showed femal/male ratio of 16% to 83%. Below is the table showing the distribution of Academic Staff of Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu.

Table 1:

Department	Male Academic Staff	Female Academic Staff
Statistics	14	1
Food Tech	5	7
Survey & Geo-Info	32	3
Painting	9	1
Public Admin	8	0
Office Tech Mgt.	10	4
Arch	9	2
Bus/Admin	25	3
Estate Mgt	11	3
Civil engineering	32	6
Basic science	18	3
Computer science	16	2
Elect/elect	33	4
Mechanical Engineering	45	5
Science Lab Tech	38	10
Mineral Resources	14	0
Ceramics	9	0
Banking & Finance	10	1
Accountancy	31	5
Hum & Social Science	39	6
Hospitality Management	8	6
Marketing	15	3
Chemical Engineering.	5	2
Quantity survey	11	2
Graphic/Textile	10	7
General Art & Design	8	4
Sculpture	10	0
Polymer Tech	15	4
Agric. & Bio Environment	19	0
Urban & Regional Planning	27	0
Fashion & Cloth Tech	1	8
Building Tech	13	2
Mass Communication	13	4
Languages	14	6
Total	577	114

Source: Auchu Polytechnic, Directorate of Academic Planning, 2013

Women Employment in Nigerian Polytechnics and the Challenges of Gender Sensitivity: A Study of Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State of Nigeria

Gandu (1998) in his study gave National Female labour participation rates in urban centres as 34.85% and 36.12% in rural areas. Also Roscher and Cavanaugh (1992) in their study of Academic women chemists in the 20th century discovered only 33% of women with Ph.D degree in chemistry were employed by academic institutions, others were employed by industries. Even Duyilemi (2007) in his study equally found out that the percentage of females in the academic sector is still very low and that in tertiary institutions most females are in junior cadres of administration.

Adegun (2012) also found out in his study that academic opportunity was more masculine than feminine in the tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. The College of Education employed the highest number of females with 27.0%, followed by the University with 18.3% and the Polytechnic with 12.8%. He concluded that the percentage of women in the upper echelon in the institutions studied in Ekiti State was very low and representation of women at the academic management position was poor. He however recommended among others that more women should be encouraged to pursue post-graduate studies so as to be qualified for lectureship appointments in tertiary institutions and that spouses should support and encourage their wives to take up academic jobs.

Onokala and Onah (1998) studied the recruitment, promotion and appointment of women to academic and administrative positions in Nigerian universities and found out that although there has been an increase in the number of female academic staff recruited into Nigerian Universities, the female percentage of academic staff is still very low. Ajayi, Goma and Johnson (1996) have equally in their research discovered that the percentage of women in tertiary institutions in sub-Saharan Africa was only 25% of the total enrolment and this is much lower than the secondary level and the latter is much lower than the primary level.

According to Mensah, Biney and Ashang(2009), “it is not possible to ignore women employment even though the employment pattern in Africa still favours men more than women”. Sutherland (2008) however expressed the view that women face serious challenges in gaining access to their daily resources and bargaining power. These no doubt, adversely affect the women hence they are considered in the world as the most vulnerable to socio-economic depression. It is on this basis that the researcher is concerned with the investigation of women employees in Auchi Polytechnic with particular focus on lectureship positions. The essence is to establish whether the polytechnic considers the issue of gender balance in the recruitment of persons into academic positions.

3. METHOD

This section explains in details the method of data collection and its source, the population and sample size of the study and the statistical analysis technique used in the analysis of data. The source of data for this study is primary. A structured questionnaire was designed into various sections to gather possible information from the respondents. Each section asked specific question from the targeted respondents. Section one tends to gather data on the demographic background and other Section deals with the nature of employment based on gender in the tertiary institution.

A total of 650 structured questionnaires were randomly administered to the targeted staff of Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi in Edo State. Only 580 questionnaires were returned. After data mining of the questionnaires for inconsistency, omission, incomplete filling, a sample size of 325 was taken for the research study. The statistical techniques adopted are simple percentage analysis, the use of charts for representation and analysis of variance using t-statistic to test the hypothesis. Students’ t-test statistic was used to test the significance relationship between the emplo

3.1 Data Presentation and Analyses

In this part, the data collected are presented and analyzed. The data are presented in tabular form indicating the title, source of data and the analysis. The analyses are both manual and electronically done with the help of statistical software known as SPSS version 16.0. The primary data collected using questionnaire method is presented in the following tables below:

Table 2. *Distribution According to Sex*

Option	Response	Percentage
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MALE	235	72
FEMALE	90	28
Total	325	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

According to the demographic information of respondents based on sex, it was seen that 235 out of the total respondents were males making 72%, while 90 were females making 28% of total respondents. The pie chart depicts that majority of the respondents are males owing to the highest number of responses.

Table 3. Distribution According to Age Bracket

Option	Response	Percentage
20-29yrs	41	13
30-39yrs	89	27
40-49yrs	103	32
50yrs above	92	28
Total	325	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Based on the distribution according to age bracket, it was shown that out of the total respondents, 41 were in the age bracket of 20-29yrs making 13%, 89 were in the age of 30-39yrs making 27%, 103 respondents were in the age bracket of 40-49yrs making 32% while 92 respondents were 50yrs and above making 28% of the total respondents. The table reveals that most of the respondent's ages fall between 40-49yrs.

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Table 4. Distribution According to Marital Status

Option	Response	Percentage
MARRIED	257	79%
SINGLE	68	21%
Total	325	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2012

In order to evaluate the marital status of the respondents, it was shown in table 3 that out of the total respondents, 257 were married making 79% of the total respondents, while 68 respondents were single making 21%. The chart depicts that majority of the respondents were married.

Table 5. Distribution According to Education

Option	Response	Percentage
HND	103	33
BSC	60	18
MSC	89	27
OTHERS	73	22
Total	325	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The distribution according to educational qualification of respondents revealed that 103 out of 325 respondents had HND, 60 had B.Sc, 89 had M.Sc while 73 respondents had other certificates making 21%, 11%, 16%, 18%, 27%, and 22% of total respondents respectively. The chart depicts that majority of the respondents are M.Sc holders.

Women Employment in Nigerian Polytechnics and the Challenges of Gender Sensitivity: A Study of Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu, Edo State of Nigeria

Table 6. *Distribution According to Number of Academic Staff in Department*

Option	Response	Percentage
3 TO 5	80	24
6 TO 8	59	18
9 TO 10	74	23
11 ABOVE	112	34
Total	325	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

In verifying the number of academic staff in the departments, it was shown that 80 out of the total respondents said that they are between 3-5 academic staffs making 24%, 59 respondents said theirs is 6-8 academic staff making 18%, 74 respondents said theirs is 9-10 academic staff making 23%, while 112 respondents have 11 and above academic staff making 34% of total respondents. The chart revealed that the maximum number of academic staff in the departments is 11 and above

Table 7. *Distribution According to Number of Female Academic Staff in Departments*

Option	Response	Percentage
3 TO 5	188	58
6 TO 8	63	19
9 TO 10	54	17
11 ABOVE	20	6
Total	325	100

Source: Field Survey, 201

From the empirical analysis on the number of female academic staff in the departments, it was shown that 188 out of the total respondents said their departments have between 3-5 female academic staff making 31% of the total respondents, 63 respondents said theirs is between 6-8 academic staff making 19%, 54 respondents agreed that theirs is between 9-10 female academic staff making 17%, while 20 respondents have 11 and above female academic staff making 6% of total respondents respectively. The chart depicts that majority of the departments have less than 2 female academic staff.

Table 8. *Distribution According to Number of Male Academic Staff*

Option	Response	Percentage
LESS THAN 2	6	2
3 TO 5	19	6
6 TO 8	62	19
9 TO 10	81	25
11 ABOVE	157	48
Total	325	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The empirical analysis on the number of male academic staff in the departments, showed that 6 out of the total respondents said their departments have less than 2 male academic staff making 2% of the total respondents, 19 said theirs is between 3-5 male academic staff making 6%, 62 respondents said theirs is between 6-8 male academic staff making 19%, 81 respondents agreed that theirs is between 9-10 male academic staff making 25%, while 157 respondents have 11 and above male academic staff making 48% of total respondents respectively. The chart depicts that majority of the departments have 11 and above male academic staff.

Table 9. Distribution According to Performance Rating of Female Academic Staff

Option	Response	Percentage
VH	89	27
H	80	25
L	78	24
VL	63	19
UN	15	5
Total	325	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

According to the analysis in table 8 on the performance rating of female academic staff 89, respondents rated female very high, 80 respondents said high, 78 respondents said low, 63 respondents said very low while 15 respondents said undecided out of the total of 325, making 27%, 25%, 24%, 19%, and 5% respectively. The chart depicts very high rating for female with regard to their academic performance.

Table 10. Distribution as to whether the Level of Educational Attainment Counts in the Recruitment of Academic Staff

Option	Response	Percentage
YES	84	26
NO	241	74
Total	325	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

From table 9, as to whether the level of educational attainment counts in the recruitment of academic staff, 84 respondents said yes while 241 said No out of the total of 325 respondent, making 26% and 74% respectively. The chart depicts that the majority of the respondents are of the view that the level of educational attainment does not count in the recruitment of academic staff.

Table 11. Distribution on the Need for Gender Balance Consideration in the Recruitment of Academic Staff

Option	Response	Percentage
YES	187	58
NO	138	42
Total	325	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Based on the analysis in table 10, with regard to the need for gender balance consideration in the recruitment of academic staff, 187 respondents said Yes while 138 respondents said No out of the total 325 respondents, making 58% and 42% respectively. The chart depicts that majority of the respondents are of the view that there should be need for gender balance consideration in the recruitment of academic staff.

Assessment on Gender Imbalance

Total	Mean	Rank
Gender Imbalance	3.79	7
Equality between gender	3.89	4
Preference to men in polytechnic employment	3.64	8
Preference to men in polytechnic employment	3.91	3
Men are more than women in polytechnic employment	3.98	1
Right educational background affecting women	3.83	5
Right educational background prevent women	3.94	2
Performance on equal basis	3.80	6
Government legislation on equal basis	3.59	9

Women Employment in Nigerian Polytechnics and the Challenges of Gender Sensitivity: A Study of Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State of Nigeria

Total	34.37	
Mean	3.82	

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The ranking of the assessment of factors responsible for gender imbalance in the polytechnic employment shows that on the average, the right educational background prevents women from being employed on equal basis with men and that men are more than women in terms of job seeking in the institution.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between employment and gender sensitivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi.

H1: There is significant relationship between employment and gender sensitivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi.

Analysis

\bar{X}	$\bar{\bar{X}}$	S	N	t_{cal}	t_{tab}
34.37	3.82	0.131	9	87.4142	2.306

$$t_{cal} = \frac{\bar{X} - \bar{\bar{X}}}{S/\sqrt{n}} \sim t_{\alpha/2, n-1}$$

Where

$$\bar{\bar{X}} = \frac{\sum \bar{X}}{n}$$

$$S.D = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (\bar{X} - \bar{\bar{X}})^2}{n - 1}}$$

N= number of sample size

$$t_{cal} = \frac{3.82 - 34.37}{0.131/\sqrt{9}} = 87.4142$$

$$t_{tab} = t_{0.05/2, 9 - 1}$$

$$t_{(0.025, 8)} = 2.306$$

Decision rule

If $t_{cal} < t_{tab}$, accept H_0

If $t_{cal} > t_{tab}$ do not reject H_1

Discussion of Result

Based on $t_{cal}(87.41) > t_{tab}(2.31)$ at 5% critical level with 8 degrees of freedom, there is statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_0). We therefore accepted H_1 and concluded that there is a significant relationship between employment and gender sensitivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria.

4. CONCLUSION

The empirical analysis clearly showed and proven that the employment status in the institution is gender bias in favour of men. In other words, men are more in academic appointments in the polytechnic than the women. The study confirms that of Duyilemi(2007) which found that the percentage of females in the academic sector is still very low and that in tertiary institutions most females are in junior cadre of administration. The study is also a confirmation of the one carried out by Adegun(2012) which found out that the percentage of women in the upper echelon in the tertiary institutions studied in Ekiti State was very low. The findings of this research are equally in line with that of Egunjobi(2009) which found the ratio of female/male to be 11.6% to 88.4% in

the University of Ilorin, and that of Onokala & Onah(1998) which discovered that the female percentage of the total academic staff recruited into the Nigerian Universities was very low.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the recommendations are as follows:

1. Efforts should be made by government to enshrine into law gender equality of employment opportunity for all qualified citizens in the country in order to give everyone equal opportunity to participate in the nation's development.
2. As a result of the agitations for the promotion of gender equality all over the world, attention should be geared towards creating job opportunities for women in the institution in order to achieve gender balance in employment.
3. In order to promote gender equality in employment in our higher institutions and other establishments whether public or private, advocacy by government and non-governmental organizations should include sensitizing the people to understand that both men and women are partners in the developmental process. To achieve this purpose, government should integrate the media in mass enlightenment campaigns on the need to promote gender balance in employment opportunities.

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Women Employment in Nigerian Polytechnics and the Challenges of Gender Sensitivity: A Study of Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State of Nigeria

Appendix

Indicating Factor Item	SA	A	SD	D	UN	TOTAL
Gender Imbalance	128	71	67	49	10	325
Equality between gender	133	92	51	28	21	325
Preference to men in polytechnic employment	103	87	69	48	18	325
Preference to men in polytechnic employment	141	79	56	33	16	325
Men are more than women in polytechnic employment	155	68	52	39	11	325
Right educational background affecting women	121	93	58	41	12	325
Right educational background prevent women	135	86	61	34	9	325
Performance on equal basis	111	97	67	42	8	325
Government legislation on equal basis	99	86	68	51	21	325