



Social Factors as Predictors of Career Advancement of Female Civil Servants in Southwest, Nigeria

Babajide Gabriel Agboola^{a*}

^a *Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.*

Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined social factors as predictors of female advancement of women in civil service in Southwest, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was used in this study. The population consisted of all 46,889 women in Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample for this study consisted of 1183 adult women from 40 Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample was selected through multi stage sampling procedure. A self-constructed questionnaire tagged "Social Factors and Career Advancement Questionnaire (SFCAQ)" was used to collect relevant data for the study. The instrument consists of three sections namely Section A, B and C. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was used to perform item analysis of the items of the questionnaire while the hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there was significant relationship between educational factor and career advancement of female civil servants. The study also revealed that there was significant relationship between marital factor and career advancement of female civil servants, likewise economic factor and career advancement of female civil servants. It was concluded that social

*Corresponding author: Email: gabrielagboola13@gmail.com;

factors like education factor, marital factor, and economic factor contributed to career advancement of female civil servants. The study recommended that women should be encouraged to involve more in career advancement in the civil service.

Keywords: Career advancement; civil servants; female; predictors; social factors.

1. INTRODUCTION

Promoting women participation in all spheres of national life have been globally accepted as a development strategy that will not only reduce poverty level of women but also serve as a means of eradicating harmful practices against their interest. However, Attoh [1] noted that “several factors such as traditions, values, customs, sexual stereotyping of social roles have always militated against the full participation of women in their work place. Although the Nigerian constitution provides all citizens with equal right, the participation of women, especially in terms of career advancement has been minimal in Nigeria. This might not be unconnected with the patriarchal culture which significantly aids gender discrimination against women at work”.

Nigerian women seem not to be represented in many fields of endeavour in equal proportion with men. This could be attributed to the fact that the Europeans that brought education to Nigeria at first merely needed men who will be taught the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) so as to help them in administration and in their mission of evangelization. In view of this, Nigerian men appear to have upper hand in education. It is generally believed that the place of a woman irrespective of her status is in the kitchen where she is expected to cook for the family in addition to other domestic services. She could incur the wrath of the man should she fail in any of these areas. Owing to the cultural socialization, a man (who is willing to help) may deem it shameful and degrading to be seen by friends and relatives getting involved in such tasks thereby leaving the wife to cope with all the demands of domestic chores. At the same time, he expects his food to be ready without any delay.

The emergence and determined survival of women in high flying jobs today in corporations and organizations depends on their own willingness to confront and fight strong barriers and hurdles that stand their way, some too grave to confront and others less weighty. They range from male chauvinism, corporate cultures/traditions organizational politics among many

others. In their quest to climb up the ladder, women seem to be facing many challenges. Some barrier seem to set up women for defeat; sluggish upward motion that drag them down in their pursuit to progress in their careers. Southwest, Nigeria appears to be a highly patriarchal society therefore the status of women appears to remain relatively low compared to that of men. Women still appear to remain marginalized and gender inequality prevails socially, academically, economically and professionally. Women play a key role in society therefore they need to be in the fore front when it comes to management.

1.1 Career Women and their Workplace Experience

Most of the decisions are made by those people in management positions, if women do not occupy these positions, all decisions will be made from men's point of view which may be at disadvantage to the women and work against enhancement of gender equity. Despite the various opportunities for advancement, women appear to be minimally advancing in their career which may be due to socio-cultural variables.

The content of the Nigerian Constitution expresses equal right for male and female citizens in the country. Nigerian women are still marginalized and face peculiar obstacles that impede their full participation in public life. In Southwest, Nigeria, the gender role ideology and patriarchy place women within the arena of home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere. Many factors have been identified to influence women's career advancement but this study will examine the degree to which social (i.e. educational factor, marital factor, age, economic factor, cultural belief and religion) uniquely determine women's career advancement.

The social factors considered in this study are educational factor, marital factor, and economic factor. Educational factor appears to influence women's career advancement. The higher level of illiteracy among women as compared to men

appears to be affecting career advancement of female civil servants since women do not have equal educational opportunities with their male counterparts in some areas. It appears that the boy child is given more opportunity than the girl child in terms of education. This marginally increases the illiterate women and stifles their competition with their male counterparts in civil service.

Education appears to be given preferably to sons because daughters are believed to leave when they get married off hence considered as a loss of family resources thereby an investment not worthwhile, the sons grow up and secure better jobs and progress in their lineage. If women receive higher education, it is mainly in the perceived women friendly careers such as teaching, nursing or catering. Compared to men, it seems that few women get to the very top leadership positions in the organizations they work for.

Studies by Ezeani [2] and Ejike [3] observed that "female education is seen generally as an investment that yields high returns in terms of social and economic gain". Ezeani [2] asserted that "the involvement of educated women in employment goes a long way in family and societal improvement". Isah [4] found that "level of education has no difference in women labour force participation. He rather noted that the impact of Structural Adjustment Programme have meant increased challenges of survival amongst families and have forced women to seek career advancement to ensure family survival. He added that majority of these women are occupying very low cadre in career advancement match with menial jobs and very low salary grade levels".

Women tend to have fewer opportunities for educational attainment [5], including fewer training possibilities during their professional practice [6,7]. "Due to this lack of education and work training, women also have fewer opportunities to access relevant work experience" [8]. Akinsanya [9] stated that "for the married woman, no matter the level of education she has attained, she can only rise as high and as fast as it is convenient for the husband and the home. This is because participation in conferences and seminars which are necessary complements and supplements for a successful academic career may be out of the question if the timing is inconvenient for the women due to her primary responsibilities".

1.2 Marital Factor and Female Career Advancement Prospect

Marital factor of a woman also appears to determine her career advancement. When it is considered that a good number of working-class ladies are married, one would easily appreciate another possible source of problem which may arise when married women are focus on their career. One of such problem is associated with pregnancy and child birth. During these periods, women may not be able to enroll for professional course. Besides, married women may, sometimes, run into difficulty of serving two masters at the same time. For example, the demands of her husband may run counter to that of her career and vice versa, hence, one of the two is bound to suffer. To obey the husband at the expense of career might affect her career advancement. On the other hand, if she decides to focus on her career at the expense of her husband, she may be inviting marital disharmony in her home which sooner or later may affect her overall activities in both the office and her matrimonial home.

Furthermore, time constraint is an issue as a large proportion of women's time is allocated to household duties. Any career woman must be ready to devote a large part of her time to her career activities. Focusing on career could, therefore, be hindered by family and domestic obligations. They may not be able to cope with combining their roles as mothers and as career women.

In addition, one's marital factor also seems to play a part in upward mobility. Garavan [10] pointed out that "corporations look less favourably on married women when it comes to promotion and even married women themselves are less likely to expect advancement than those who are single. In addition to marital factor, as one's rank increases the likelihood of divorce increases, indicating that conflict over family and work responsibilities as well as the wife's potential job transfers are frequently cited as problems in the marriages of career women".

Ugwu [11] in his study of employed 'Sandwich' Generation Women – household with mother in-law, husband and husband's siblings used a sample size of 147 women and gather data using questionnaire and interview. Analysis was done using chi-square and the result obtained showed that sandwich women that receive care giving support either from husband or form house

workers and mother in-laws experience less stress and cope very well with their career advancement.

Economic factors relate to such factors that concern the well-being of individuals. Economic factors are considered to have great influence on decisions of individuals, including their decisions to focus on career. Women seem not to have enough resources to enable them run professional courses or in-service courses that will favour career advancement. The economic situation seems to have heightened this problem in the sense that, very few women seem not to have the economic power to finance themselves in embarking on programmes that will support career advancement; they have to depend on their husbands or close family relations to sponsor them. These cases do not encourage them because they see career advancement as a waste of time and resources.

Looking at it from another dimension, observation has shown that low socio-economic factor of women which occur as a result of wage discrimination appears to be another barrier which women face. In the home setting, husbands appear to control their wives economically and prevent their independence by not allowing them to earn more money than their husbands. However, some women, having a higher salary than their husbands seem to have been forced to resign from their jobs to keep their marriage.

“The relationship between income and work values is very important. People with higher income may value higher earnings more because success is often measured with higher earnings in many societies. The same goes for women in their career advancement. Maslow’s theory of human motivation suggests that the most basic level of needs (physiological and safety) must be met before an individual will strongly desire the higher level needs (love and sense of belonging, esteem, and self-actualization)” [12]. Thus, people with lower income may desire more earnings because they need the money to meet their physical needs thereby making them to work harder as well as desire to attain higher educational level.

Another study conducted by Asiyanbola [13] examined “the relationship between wife’s income earning and husband family work. The data was obtained using a questionnaire and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Sample for the study was 150

married women in Abeokuta town. A correlation coefficient of 0.81 at 0.05 significant showed a high positive relationship. Asiyanbola further noted that most sex role orientation held by and about women are changing, becoming less traditional in the sense of less rigid sex specific definition and expectation”.

Raz-Yurovich [14] argued that “this economic independence gained through paid work does not necessarily affect the level of career advancement, but it provides a woman with the resources she would need to develop her career”. Raz-Yurovich [14] assume that “women’s economic factor will be more likely to threaten career advancement in country contexts characterised by more traditional gender roles, and in which men’s earnings are on average sufficient to satisfy a couple’s material aspirations, the barriers to labour market entry for women are particularly high, and the state offers little support for working mothers”.

Based on the foregoing, this study intends to investigate the social factors as predictors of female advancement of women in civil service in Southwest, Nigeria. The study specifically examined the relationship between social factors (educational factor, marital factor, and economic factor) and career advancement of female civil servants.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were generated for the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between educational factor and career advancement of female civil servants.
2. There is no significant relationship between marital factor and career advancement of female civil servants.
3. There is no significant relationship between economic factor and career advancement of female civil servants.

2. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was used in this study. The population consisted of all 46,889 women in Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample for this study consisted of 1183 adult women from 40 Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample was selected through multi stage sampling procedure.

A self-constructed questionnaire tagged “Social Factors and Career Advancement Questionnaire (SFCAQ)” was used to collect relevant data for the study. The instrument consists of three sections namely Section A, B and C. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The items in the instrument were presented to experts of Adult Education and Tests & Measurement, to ascertain its face and content validity. The instrument was said to have facial relevance and concerned with the subject matter, it claimed to measure.

The reliability of the instrument was determined by finding the internal consistency through a study that was carried out outside the sampled locations. The instrument was administered on 40 respondents. In order to ascertain reliability of the instrument, data collected were tested using Cronbach’s alpha which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.816 thereby confirming the internal consistency of the instrument. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was used to perform item analysis of the items of the questionnaire while the hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 showed the item analysis of social factors influencing career advancement of female civil servants in Southwest, Nigeria with educational factor having a mean mark of 9.86, marital factor had 9.81, while economic factor had 10.80.

3.1 Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between educational factor and career advancement of female civil servants.

Table 2 showed that the r-cal value of 0.300 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between educational factor and career advancement of female civil servants. Educational factor is lowly related to career advancement of female civil servants.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between marital factor and career advancement of female civil servants.

Table 3 showed that the r-cal value of 0.212 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between marital factor and career advancement of female civil servants. Marital factor is lowly related to career advancement of female civil servants.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between economic factor and career advancement of female civil servants.

Table 4 showed that the r-cal value of 0.765 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between economic factor and career advancement of female civil servants. Economic factor is highly related to career advancement of female civil servants.

4. DISCUSSION

It was revealed that there was significant relationship between educational factor and career advancement of female civil servants. The probable cause could be due to the direct link between certification and career advancement. The implication of this finding is that when educational factor are favourable, there will be improvement in career advancement of female civil servants. Ojukwu [15] believed that the more highly educated a woman is, the more she could get an interesting and enjoyable job so as to advance her career. This finding is in line with the studies of Ejike [3] and Ojukwu [15] as they found significant association between educational status and career advancement of female civil servants.

The study revealed that there was significant relationship between marital factor and career advancement of female civil servants. The probable cause could be due to the effect of the decisional power vested in the husband in any marriage. The husband’s decision in the home could positively or negatively determine the woman career advancement. The implication of this finding is that career advancement of female civil servants will depend on marital factor. Akinsanya [9] stated that “for the married woman, no matter the level of education she has attained, she can only rise as high and as fast as it is convenient for the husband and the home”. The finding is in line with the study of Ugwu [11] who concluded that marital factor significantly influenced career advancement of female civil servants.

Table 1. Item analysis of social factors influencing women advancement in civil service in Southwest, Nigeria

							N = 1183
N	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
Educational factor							
1.	Only educated women are allowed to participate in trade unionism	-	262 (22.1)	517 (43.7)	404 (34.2)	1.88	0.74
2.	Women with lower education encounters delay in promotion	-	307 (26.0)	500 (42.3)	376 (31.8)	1.94	0.76
3.	Level of education discourages women from professional development	-	396 (33.5)	391 (33.1)	396 (33.5)	2.00	0.82
4.	Stressful inter-cadre adjustment has discouraged women with lower education to upgrade their qualification	-	401 (33.9)	450 (38.0)	332 (28.1)	2.06	0.79
5.	Highly educated women are more dedicated at place of work	-	307 (26.0)	551 (46.6)	325 (27.5)	1.98	0.73
						9.86	
Marital factor							
6.	There is still tradition that make women being subordinate to men	-	432 (36.5)	438 (37.0)	313 (26.5)	2.10	0.79
7.	Women are seen as not as energetic in facing academic rigour due to their responsibilities at home	-	323 (27.3)	529 (44.7)	331 (28.0)	1.99	0.74
8.	Children bearing discourages women from advancing their career prospect	-	424 (35.8)	208 (17.6)	551 (46.6)	1.89	0.90
9.	The general notion is that women education ends in the kitchen	-	429 (36.3)	128 (10.8)	626 (52.9)	1.83	0.93
10.	Husband wishes still supersede the wishes of the wife	-	410 (34.7)	352 (29.8)	421 (35.6)	1.99	0.84
						9.81	
Economic Factor							
11.	The low per capita income in the country is a barrier for women	94 (7.9)	285 (24.1)	663 (56.0)	141 (11.9)	2.28	0.77
12.	The occupational roles of women do not afford them the opportunity to further their education	46 (3.9)	119 (10.1)	474 (40.1)	544 (46.0)	1.72	0.80
13.	Lack of financial strength makes it difficult for women to seek further education	47 (4.0)	355 (30.0)	616 (52.1)	165 (13.9)	2.24	0.74
14.	The high cost of education discourages women from going to school	46 (3.9)	191 (16.1)	428 (36.2)	518 (43.8)	1.80	0.85
15.	Monthly income of women seems to be a major barrier to update their knowledge	178 (15.0)	583 (49.3)	379 (32.0)	43 (3.6)	2.76	0.75
						10.80	

Table 2. Relationship between educational factor and career advancement of female civil servants

Variables	N	Mean	Stand dev	r-cal	P-value
Educational Factor	1183	9.86	2.92	0.300*	0.000
Career advancement of female civil servants	1183	39.75	8.33		

*P<0.05

Table 3. Relationship between marital factor and career advancement of female civil servants

Variables	N	Mean	Stand dev	r-cal	P-value
Marital Factor	1183	9.81	3.03	0.212*	0.000
Career advancement of female civil servants	1183	39.75	8.33		

*P<0.05

Table 4. Relationship between economic factor and career advancement of female civil servants

Variables	N	Mean	Stand dev	r-cal	P-value
Economic Factor	1183	10.80	2.64	0.765*	0.000
Career advancement of female civil servants	1183	39.75	8.33		

* $P < 0.05$

The study revealed that there was significant relationship between economic factor and career advancement of female civil servants. The probable cause could be because of the link between economic and finances. The financial implication associated with pursuance of more certification seems to be one of the determining factor considered by women. The implication of this finding is that the more economic factor is favourable, the better the career advancement of women but when the economic factor is not favourable, it will affect career advancement of female civil servants. Career advancement is increasingly becoming commercialized. Raz-Yurovich [14] concluded that “this economic independence gained through paid work does not necessarily affect the level of career advancement, but it provides a woman with the resources she would need to develop her career”. Kaplan and Stier [16] concluded that economic factors play more prominent role in career advancement.

5. CONCLUSION

Sequel to the findings of this study, it was concluded that social factors like education factor, marital factor, and economic factor contributed to career advancement of female civil servants. As much as those social factors are consequential to career advancement of female civil servants, the interest and support of male factor cannot be underrated as they provide an enabling environment and necessary push when their female contemporaries are in their low ebb.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Women should be encouraged to involve more in career advancement in the civil service
2. Government at all level should also encourage active participation of women in career advancement in the civil service

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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