



## **Examining Challenges of Female Gender Employee's and Career Progression in the Hotel Industry, Bauchi State, Nigeria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study offers an understanding of female gender challenges in career progression in the hospitality industry. It attempts to identify the causes of poor representation of the female gender in manager position. A survey of 30 hotels in the city of Bauchi, Nigeria was made; finding out the representation of women in the general manager position, owners of hotels and employees. Result obtained was analysed using simple percentages. A relative poor career progression of female to male gender was apparent. Conclusions reached suggest that the hospitality industry have a long way in implementing policy on gender equality and therefore recommends that Nigerian university commission build in the hospitality program in its system to enable the female gender easy access to higher degree in hospitality and a resultant effect on their career progression.

**Keywords:** Challenges of Female Gender, Hospitality, Career Progression

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In today's competitive environment, hospitality firms recognize that they are to deliver outstanding service quality to get hold of and retain a pool of satisfied and loyal customers for survival (Tam, 2000; Yasin & Yavas, 2001). This is achieved through the management and employees of the hotels. These stake holders are both male and female. However, women all over the world share some common sorts of marginalization in public life. It thus appears as if female gender is yet to be proportionally represented in the hotel leadership position. Social

traits and opportunities are associated with male and female gender. Female gender seems to be minority at the top leadership positions in the hotel. This suggests that there are prevailing circumstances that hinder the female gender from attaining the height of their career in leadership position. The study will give insight into how these issues of gender affect the female's leadership position in the Nigerian hospitality industry.

It is encouraging to note that the gender issues have received attention in the previous years as revealed by the work of the following researchers. Agee (1996), marginalisation of women in Nigeria the extent, causes and solutions Adebayo and Udegbe, (2004) studied the perception of differentiation of boss- subordinate in African setting Katara, (1989). This article has studied specific objective of assessing the representation of the female gender in leadership position of the hospitality industry in Bauchi metropolis of Bauchi state, Nigeria. It has further assessed the opportunities for human capital development needs of higher level manpower and the role of government in creating career path for the female gender in the industry.

Hospitality industry appears to be a young growing dynamic sector of the economy, (Kinton and Ceserani, 2007). The industry, from which hotels are central, is service intensive; and consequently depends heavily on its human resources. In each department, there is a high investment, in modern equipment and luxurious buildings. Where the issues of staff in an organization are not carefully taken care of, there may be a likely failure of the returns on these huge investments. Human resources (HR) therefore, seem to be an important resource that hotels have. Thus human resources developments of the staff appear to be the starting point for success in hospitality organizations.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Hospitality is a harmonious mixture of food, beverage and shelter, physical environment, behaviour and attitude of people. This produces a feeling of being "at home" and "at ease", in the group of people who do not produce hospitality but stay under the roof (Reul and Cancasse1993). The above definition has a missing link, it defines the business of hospitality from the concept of hospitality. However, where hospitality incurs cost which must be paid by the person receiving the hospitality product either directly or indirectly then it is hospitality business. These include hotel resorts, suites and event management etc.

There are few women in leadership positions of the hospitality as posited by Emuobo (2012). Though, the numbers of female managers are increasing worldwide (Li and Wang, 1987). However access to manager and leadership position of women seem constrained.

The assertion of Obasanjo (1989) states that women by virtue of their physiology give and nurture life and this social responsibility that comes by reason of this role make women peculiar in national development; this condition would affect the overall development of the country. The assertion suggests that the women are to nurture life capable of being productive in human endeavours and national development. Since gender according to Jaja, (2004) is a socially defined sex role, attitude and values which communities and societies describe as appropriate, there is therefore, possible effect of these defined roles on public offices to be held by women in the hospitality industry. Organizations profess themselves to be gender-neutral, for example, with their practice of filling an abstract job with a person who possesses the requisite qualifications. But when the "job description" written and unwritten for a leadership position includes 12-hour days, business meetings and social events on weekends, and little time for non job-related obligations, many women cannot qualify because of their family responsibilities. The supposedly gender-neutral job, then, is not. The workplace is an important arena for gender inequality in our society because; the workplace maintains sex

differentiation by concentrating women and men in different setting and assigning them different duties.

Sex differentiation in job leads to unequal earnings, authority, and social status for women and men. Marginalisation of women in decision-making and participation in developmental activities has had a negative effect on national development. Gender bias and gender disparities have perpetuated exploitation of women for centuries Sigalow, & Fox (2014). There are policies and practices in both private and public sectors for the implementation of gender equity (CDM, FMO, NORFUND and IFC, 2009). The report agrees with the National gender, policy and strategic framework (implementation plan) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2008-2013). These guiding principles are for both public and private sectors to play the role in achieving gender equality. These reports presuppose that there is an existing gender inequality in both private and public sector. However it was based on the assumption that there is a political will to respond to the challenges identified in the national gender policy.

An example of an empirical study in Nigeria, conducted in Lagos state, identified the numbers of women involved in private sector as directors and top managers were 13.87 % and 13.84 % respectively (Goldstar, 2005) Trained personnel are needed to manage these establishments for tourism development in Nigeria (Okonkwo and Jacinta 2013).). On the contrary Norwegians quoted 40 % which was analysed by Wang and kelan, (2013); the results showed that firms with older and better educated female directors are more likely to appoint female board chairs. Thus the percentage of female chief executive appointments increased with the percentage of independent directors with qualification. It therefore seems that the percentage increase in the presence of female directors on board and quota might likely increase the top female leaders of an organisation.

Universities all over the world serve as centres of learning where qualified candidates study for the purpose of acquiring degrees. The institution is designed to meet the needs of high level manpower universally, (Yon lonfoun, 2004). Thus the role played by the universities cannot be dawn played, because they contribute to nation building and development. However, key in the issues raised is education. Where hospitality organisations want to increase the number of female gender at the managerial level; there may be need for higher degrees qualification. The relative scarce nature of the course in Nigerian university and unavailability of the course as an option in JAMB for university registration and subsequent admission is a matter of concern. Education favours the male population and gender discrimination extends from education to the work place (World of Work, 1996). It can be stated that poor investment in education of women has helped to retard the participation of women in the labour force and to channel them into a narrow range of occupations. Thus their growth is capped. Investment in education involves creating access to education for women such that the family responsibility which is needful for the good of the society balances the developmental processes of a woman.

It is also sad to note that majority of the federal and state owned universities do not award degrees in the field of hospitality, while some offer few courses in tourism, others have not met the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) required accreditation. However, the Nigeria Tourism Development Master Plan of 2006 gives evidence of the nation's commitment to further development of the industry. This industry is multi-disciplinary, cutting across lodging, catering services, transportation, travel agencies/airline operators, etc. Trained personnel are needed to manage these establishments for tourism development in Nigeria Okonkwo and Jacinta (2013). Higher degrees in hospitality are obtainable mostly outside of Nigeria. Hence, how can the female gender increase her capacity in hospitality? The salient role of men is work and family as less important, inferring the salient role of women as the family and work as less important, (Barnett and Marshall 1991).

Women would not want to fail in the home front. Where the course is available in the country, the possibility of studying and taking care of the family may be an option. On the contrary the men may perhaps find it easy from the above assertion to study abroad.

The hospitality and tourism programmes are more obtainable in the polytechnics at national diploma and higher national diploma than universities in Nigeria. Thus the nature of the qualification has already predetermined the limit of the candidate's position in the industry and government offices. This can be attributed to government, who creates policies and structures that can influence the lifestyle of labour force Kauppinene (2004, p. 99).

This need for women training was reiterated by Dantata of the National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism Nigeria. He opined that women have to be trained to take advantage of the opportunities in tourism and hospitality. However, women stereotypes abilities and tendencies (Anker, 1997) may be an inhibition to the study abroad.

The increase in women movement to the middle level management is more than to the higher level management; the reasons identified were lack of line experiences, inadequate career opportunity, gender based stereotypes and old boys' network at the top (Oakley, 2000). Other challenges identified during the (United Nations World Tourism Organisation) UNWTO were the gap in ambition, knowledge of tourism and hospitality as it relates to training. These gaps are narrowed with only negligible differences noticed by Prestwich, Rosen, T. Jerdee and T.L. (1975) in job related behaviour and leadership styles of male and female. In agreement Gregg and Johnson, (1999) explained that females with demographic background similar to men were identified to have skills, attributes and attitudes that are required to be at leadership and management positions within hospitality industry. However, narrowing the gap in training inhibits the women from achieving their potentials.

On the contrary more than the drive built in the structure for the female gender to climb the leadership ladder, the responsibility for growth and development is for the employee male or female. There is a proof that employee movement in hospitality industry is perceived as positive and offers great opportunity for career and higher salary (Carbon, Garavan, O'brien and mcdonnel, 2003). More over career mobility is an attribute of hotel management and is self-directed (Ladkin 2002). However the structure needs to be in place for the motivated person to fulfil this drive for mobility. Social indicators also have impact on female genders progression This may influence relocation and change of jobs decision, since change of location may also have negative effect on female hotel manager's personality (Burke 2005).

### **3. MATERIALS AND METHOD**

The research design is quantitative. The qualitative method adopted is the study of secondary data from the websites of the national board for technical education and the national university commission. The method agrees with Gills and Johnson, (2002) who maintains that secondary data comprise raw data, and published summaries by organisation. The quantitative design takes on survey method to illicit the opinion of the personnel from randomly selected registered hotels in Bauchi metropolis. The choice was guided by the research objective.

The study was conducted in Bauchi state of Nigeria among 30 hotels having a total population of 624 employees. Thus a structured close ended questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. The data gathered from the field were translated into tables and analysed using statistical method of simple frequency distribution and percentages in order to understand the difference in opinions and responses in relations to the subject matter. The study was carried out without regards to respondent's demographic variables.

#### 4. RESULTS PRESENTED

This section focuses on the statistical testing of the research questions formulated for this study

##### Results and Discussion

**Table 1.** Percentage representation of hospitality programmes in Nigerian universities.

1	Total number of universities.	115	Percentages
2	Total number universities offering hospitality and tourism related courses at undergraduate level and 2 at masters level	4	3.5 %

Source: Online survey from Nigerian university commission (NUC)

**Table 2.** Female representation in hotel ownership by percentage.

Variables	Number	Percentage
Male	22	73.3%
Female	8	26.6%
Total	30	100%

Field survey 2014

**Table 3.** Employee female representation by percentage.

Male	383	61.6%
Female	240	38.4%
Total	624	100%

Source Field survey 2014 /A

**Table 4.** Female representation at the general manager level of hotels in Bauchi.

Total number of hotels	30	100
Male managers	25	83.3%
Female managers	5	16.6%

Source: Field Survey (2014)

Among the 30 participating hotels only 5 representing 16.6% of hotel are owned by female proprietors.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The result above indicates that hospitality programmes in the Nigerian universities are few, a representation of less than five percent (5%) against other courses that could be above 95 % representation at post graduate level. Thus it can be generalised that hospitality programmes are not available in the universities of Nigeria at post graduate level, where high level manpower are developed. The possibility is that it could have contributed to the inability of the female staff's developmental effort in Nigeria. Whereas male counterpart can easily decide to travel outside the country, the female staffs cannot easily take the bold step of leaving their families. This could explain the reason for low female representation of hotel ownership of 28% of the total hotel owners in Bauchi. Thus generally investment in hospitality industry is done by men. More so, out of the total number of 624 employees working in 30 hotels selected for the survey, only 240 (39%) are females while 61 % of the workers are males. For the 30 hotels sampled, 83.3 % are managed by men while females account for 16.6%. Ladkin (2002) pointed out that career mobility is an attribute of hotel management and is self-directed. If the government is not building structures in place for development that can lead to career progression, it then means that progress limit is predetermined for the female employees of the hospitality industry.

There is a proof that employees movement in hospitality industry is perceived as positive and offers great opportunity for career and higher salary (Carbon, Garavan, O'Brien and McDonnell, 2003). The privilege of higher salary is also withdrawn from those employees that are not making progress. Thus the gap in ambition and knowledge of tourism and hospitality as it relates to training identified by the UNWTO is not likely to be narrowed if the university educational system of Nigeria fails to build in the programmes of hospitality at post graduate level. This unavailability of the programme at the post graduate level is implying that they are not delivering their mandate of meeting the needs of high level manpower universally, (Yon lonfoun, 2004) and developing structures for learning Kauppinene (2004, p. 99).

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The growth of the Nigerian economy is reflected in the growth of the hospitality and tourism sector, therefore the challenge of high level manpower should be addressed if the hospitality and tourism sector will compete for international tourist. The manpower need requires critical thinking and judgment that can warrant decisions from a high level capacity that has been developed. In discussing the findings a number of practical implications on the career progress of women in the industry were access to university higher degrees, since female employees may not easily leave their family to pursue studies in other developed nations that has the program at higher degrees. The gap in occupying managerial positions in the hotel industry by women may likely continue as result of this challenge. Thus the study suggests that government build in hospitality programmes in the Nigerian university to allow female employees and potential hotel owners develop their capacity for international and domestic business.

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