



Psychosocial Perceptions of Female Students' Leadership Roles in ... Adika, L. O. (2026)

Psychosocial Perceptions of Female Students' Leadership Roles in Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated some psychosocial factors in Emmanuel Alayande University of Education female students' leadership roles. The descriptive Survey design was adopted for the study with a sample of one hundred and fifty participants, randomly selected from the five faculties in the university. Three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 margin level with a degree of freedom 148. The t-test statistical method was adopted for the analysis. The findings revealed that no significant differences existed in the leadership roles of the university female students based on parental educational background ($1.96 > 0.24$); family type (polygamy and monogamy) ($1.96 > 0.52$); and religion ($1.96 > 0.23$). Based on the findings, conclusions were drawn and recommendations made.

Keywords: Leadership, psycho-social, perception

Introduction

The hope of any society or group lies on its leadership. Leaders who have succeeded in the art are those who have vision; those who know the goals of the group and how to achieve them; those who know where they are going and also know how to get there by influencing other group members to get to their destination. From time immemorial, the ratio of females in leadership (at whatever level) is relatively low compared to their male counterparts (Miller & Kraul, 2004). Female gender remains underrepresented within public, corporate, and private organizational leadership positions (Emmerik, Wendt, & Euwema, 2010). Leadership is said to require a lot of time, energy, intelligence, economic power, a stable psychological being and a lot of other qualities. The low level of female participation in leadership may be as a result of lack of these needed attributes. Socially, any lady that takes part in politics is regarded as abnormal. The society used to treat them as men because their behaviour and activities often negate the socially accepted norms and beliefs about women. Men even went to the extent of calling them names like witches harlots and bastards. This has most of the times led to their withdrawn attitudes to taking leadership roles in the society. Campus politics requires that the individual be economically viable, stable and buoyant. It should be noted that without a sound economic standing, politics could be so uninteresting and frustrating. Some other factors that help in taking one leadership role or the other is the individual's psychological state of being, how composed she is while facing a crowd, how stable she is emotionally, how well she could cope with stressful situations, how tolerant she is, how fluent she speaks, her ability to convince her followers and so on.

Despite the cry for women and females involvement in crucial leadership roles, Aremu and Hammed (1998) noted that the fact still remains that there seems to be more noise than action on the issue. Male dominance in leadership positions (campus leadership inclusive) has been notable in all sphere of government; where men have clearly over-shadowed women in power and in number. For example, in the Nigeria's 10 National Assembly (2023-2027), female representation is historically low, with only 20 women out of 469 members. That is approximately 4.2%. This consists of 4 female senators out of 109 in the Senate, and 16 female members out of 360 in the House of Representatives. Women hold less than 5% of national legislative. The low numbers have prompted the introduction of the Special Seats Bill, aimed at creating 37 additional seats for women in the National Assembly to improve inclusion. In Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo in student unionism, out of the thirteen (13) union leaders, four (4) of them are females. That is a percentage of 30.77. In recent years, this seems to be the highest percentage. In fact, in most cases, the number of female student union officers in a particular session is either one or two out of about 13 executive members. Rarely in traditional society were women able to hold political office, because they were considered too weak and emotional to exercise responsible leadership (Hodges, 2001). Makhubu (1998) noted that the poor participation of women in higher education (both as students and academics) might be linked to the traditional social attitudes regarding the role of women. The argument that most women are socialized to believe that leadership is a man's game, leads to the conclusion that participation of females will remain lower than that of men in that females lack that ambition to seek leadership offices.



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The first explanation for not running for leadership roles according to Miller and Kraus (2004) is that they are not interested in government or politics, but more interested in "female things". Sapiro and Farah (1980) claim that women's family responsibilities have been found to affect their political ambition and the kinds of political activism they pursue. However, this particular explanation for women's lack of participation should not apply to most college-age females. It could be argued that post socialization, away from government and leadership interests, and toward more feminine interests like nurturing and caring types of activities could contribute to lack of female political participation. It is possible that college women are involved in other students' activities that better reflect women's interest, volunteer activities, for example. Also, women might not contemplate running for student union government because they do not have career plans that involve politics. It is true that students are more likely to participate in student activities that are related to their academic major or future career plans (McCannon and Benett, 1996). So having strong academic programmes that women are most likely to major in might decrease the number of women participating in campus politics because those programmes have other student organizations in which women get involved. However, participation in campus governance does not just offer important experience for students interested in political careers. Participation in campus governance is linked to desirable outcomes for individual students as well as to positive contributions to the welfare of the campus community (Kuh & Lund, 1994). Specifically, students gained organizational, planning, managing and decision making skills from their experience in student union government. They were able to put to use ideas and methods they learned in their classes. Women could be missing out on valuable experience useful in any career. Secondly, student union government might not be addressing women's concerns. Lavant and Terrell (1994) claimed that the type of student organization students participate in depends on their ethnic backgrounds, and the same might be true for women. Women might be more involved in student organizations that address their concerns. It is possible that women are not interested in student governance because it rarely addresses issues of concerns to women. Of course one way to make a government to address one's concern is to participate in it. A third explanation for women not running for office is that they do not believe they have the qualifications. This could be a result of lack of leadership role models. If women do not see other women in such positions of power, they might not perceive themselves as having the necessary skills. So having more women in leadership roles should increase the likelihood of women running for office. Additionally, Women might be more likely to encourage other women to run. Having a faculty advisor who goes out of her or his way to encourage women to run for office could reinforce the idea that women are qualified for leadership roles.

In the past two decades, researchers have explicated ways in which Social factors such as gender bias (Ayman, 1993), gender roles stereotypes, and sexist promotional practice have contributed to the under-representation of women in management roles (Astin & Leland, 1991; Buttner, 2001; More & Buttner, 1997; Payne, Fuqua, & Canegami, 1997; Swanson, 2000). For example, researchers have found that due to disparity in domestic responsibilities, women do not have time to pursue leadership roles (Crawford & Unger, 2000). Because women occupy a higher percentage of lower status position, their leadership potential is less visible. Women are also less integrated into dominant organizational coalitions, which decrease their chances of being selected for leadership positions (Bass, 1985). In addition, because women are perceived as having less leadership potential than men (e.g., Payne et al, 1997) or as being excessively "nice", they are not as readily considered for leadership & Miller, 2000). Some studies have attempted to address the question of which psychological variables influence or predict college women's leadership aspirations (Kreuzer, 1992: & Boatwright, 2003). The study by Kreuzer suggests that gender role, defined as 'a set of behaviours, attitudes, and motivations culturally associated with sex' (Davidson and Gordon, 1979), may be a significant explanatory variable.

Objectives of The Study

The present study sought to find out the perceived leadership roles of female students in Emmanuel Alayande University of Education. Specifically, the study sought to provide answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent do female students from both educated and non-educated backgrounds perceive their leadership roles?
2. How do female students from monogamous and polygamous family backgrounds perceive their leadership roles?
3. What differences exist in the perceived leadership roles of Christian and Moslem female students?



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Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested in this study:

1. There will be no significant difference in the perceived leadership roles of female students from educated and non-educated background.
2. There will be no significant difference in the perceived leadership roles of the female students from polygamous and monogamous family background.
3. There will be no significant difference in the perceived leadership roles of Christian and Muslim female students.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was employed in this study. This is deemed suitable because it enables a researcher to obtain the opinions of representative sample of target population so as to generalize on the entire population.

Validity of Instrument

Validity of an instrument describes the extent to which a measuring instrument measures exactly what it is supposed to measure (Hassan, 1995). To establish the validity of Female leadership Personality Factors Scale (FLPFS), the test items were subjected to vetting by experts in the field. Thereafter, some of the items were deleted, while some were added following the experts' suggestions. This ensured both the face and content validity of the instrument.

Reliability of Instrument

A test re-test reliability procedure was carried out using about 50 female students from Emmanuel Alayande University of Education two weeks after the first administration. The two scores were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation co-efficient formula. The correlation found to be 0.72, which was satisfactory for its reliability.

Sample

The sample consisted of one hundred and fifty female students with the use of simple random sampling technique. The researcher used simple random sampling to select the participants of the study from the five faculties in the university. Thirty female students were randomly sampled in each of the schools (science, Arts and Social Sciences, Education, Languages and Vocational and Technical education). In all, one hundred and fifty participants took part in the study.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for this study is mainly a self-designed questionnaire tagged Female Leadership Personality' Factors Scale (FLPFS). The instrument comprises of two sections. Section A is the demographic aspect that asked for the personal data of subjects without requesting for their names. Section B contains twenty-five (25) items, which deal with some factors in female students' leadership roles. This section is in conformity with likert type wherein subjects were expected to give their responses on the basis of their agreement with each statement on a five-point scale.

Procedure

The researcher was personally involved in the distribution and administration of the instrument. The researcher went to the five schools within the college and sampled thirty (30) female students each from each of the schools. He took time to explain every aspect of the questionnaire. He then gave the respondents some time to respond to the instrument. He then retrieved the questionnaires and crosschecked if they were correctly filled. The questionnaires not correctly filled were rendered invalid, while the remaining one hundred and fifty were used for the analysis.

Data Analysis

The measuring instrument was scored on five points Likert scale with the range of agreement. Therefore, the t-test statistical method was used to analyse the data collected at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

Three hypotheses were stated for this study. The results of the study are tested with the t-test statistical method at 0.05 level of significance. The results are hereby presented hypothesis by hypothesis.

Hypothesis One: This hypothesis stated "there will be no significant difference in the leadership roles of female students from educated and non-educated background.



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Table 1: Mean difference in female students' perceived leadership role of students from educated and non-educated background.

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Sig. Level	P
Educate Background	123	79.04	11.9					
Non-Educated background	27	79.7	13.7	148	0.24	1.96	0.05	Accepted

Table 1 shows the data collected from 150 respondents on female leadership. The data collected shows 123 respondents from educated background and 27 from non-educated backgrounds.

The mean and Standard Deviation (x and SD) of those from educated background are 79.04 and 11.9 respectively while that of the non-educated ones is 79.7 and 13.7 respectively. The t-test was applied in the analysis and the t-calculated was 0.24 while the t-observed Value is 1.96, with the degree of freedom 148 and calculated at 0.05 level of significance. The t-observed is greater than the t-calculated; hence the null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis Two: This hypothesis predicted that there would be no significant difference in the perceived leadership roles of female students from polygamous and monogamous backgrounds.

Table 2: Mean difference in leadership roles of female students from polygamous and monogamous background

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Sig. Level	P
Polygamous	48	78.33	10.6					
Monogamous	102	79.4	12.7	148	0.52	1.96	0.05	Accepted

From the data collected, the mean and Standard Deviation (X and SD) of those from polygamous backgrounds were 78.3 and 10.6 while that of monogamous background were 79.4 and 12.7 respectively. The t-test method was used in analysing the data. The calculated value was 0.5 while the observed value was 1.96, with the degree of freedom of 148 and 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Three: There would be no significant difference in the perceived leadership roles of Christian and Muslim female students.

Table 3: Mean difference in leadership roles of Christian and Muslim female students.

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Sig. Level	P
Christian	82	78.9	12.5					
Monogamous	66	79.22	11.7	148	0.23	1	0.05	Accepted

From the data collected, the mean and Standard Deviation of respondents from Christian backgrounds is 78.9 and 12.5 respectively, while those from Muslim background are 79.22 and 11.7 respectively with 148 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance.

From the result, it could be deduced that the t-calculated value is lesser than the t-observed ($0.2 < 1.96$). The null hypothesis is thereby accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis stated that there would be no significant difference in the perceived leadership roles of female students from educated and non- educated backgrounds. The t-test comparison of mean (x) and Standard Deviation (SD) of female students' leadership disposition from educated and non-educated backgrounds (Table 1) indicates that the null hypothesis was upheld. This result could be explained in a way that the academic setting brings together people from various backgrounds and this becomes a "leveler" to all, wherein everyone is exposed to the same instruction and materials and thus have equal opportunities. In a study of females in politics, Miller and Kraus (2004) found that education increased the disagreement that women are not suited for campus politics. Eighty percent of individuals with junior college or Bachelor's degrees did not hold such sexist beliefs about women's abilities in politics. The finding of this research can also be explained in the ways that in campus politics, the issue of class is neglected and people vote for personalities rather than influence. Most people from non-educated backgrounds look more 'radical' on campus than those with educated backgrounds, who most of the time look more decent and regard politics as a 'dirty' game. In a research carried out by Alao (1983), he found that 46% of his interviewees (who are female politicians) were from educated families while about 54% were from non-educated backgrounds. According to Alao (1983) therefore, coming from a literate family background is shown to be of less importance in motivating one into active leadership role. Hypothesis two compared female students' family background. It was accepted that there was no significant difference in the leadership dispositions of those from



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polygamous and monogamous backgrounds. Olayinka (1980) however noted that better educated and upward mobile individuals (with careers carefully and appropriately chosen) are likely to come from small families where children receive more attention, greater encouragement and interaction between parents and children is more. In the third hypothesis, it was found that no significant difference existed in the perceived leadership roles of Muslim and Christian female students. This by implications means both Christian and Muslim female students have the same disposition towards campus politics. This result is not out of place as both religions preach and uphold peace, as a vital need of our society and therefore, for our society to know peace, people must participate in leadership.

Conclusion

Leadership is a process of influence. Any would-be leader must therefore be economically buoyant, emotionally stable and possess certain interpersonal skills. The findings of this study revealed that there was no significant difference in the perceived leadership roles of female students from educated and non-educated background and Christian and Muslims female students.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the followings are recommended:

1. The university management can make social policies to ensure female students' successful participation in student unionism.
2. Female students should be adequately mobilized to participate actively in student government.
3. The consciousness of everyone needs to be raised concerning gender inequality and the need for a change.
4. Certain percentage of positions in student union government can be earmarked for female students.
5. Female students should be assigned responsibilities in smaller groups like the department and at faculty levels.

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