

**The Challenges of Gender Inequalities in Nigerian Universities:
Babcock University in Perspective**

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ABSTRACT

There had been little or no consideration given to the issue of gender inequality and the effect it would have on the country's educational system as well as the achievement on the laid down education objectives. This paper highlights the relevance of gender insensitivity to educational development in Nigerian Universities using Babcock University as a case study. It draws attention to the essentials of gap-closure between men and women education, gender inequality as anti-women and pro-men, female discrimination during course admission/allocation and quality of education acquired. It concludes on a note that women underdevelopment is synonymous to the society's development.

INTRODUCTION

Women's reproductive and community management roles and potentials had been marginalized and left out of the system of national accounting from time immemorial. This had logically reduce the country's level of Gross Domestic Product, although gender differences between men and women vary across major countries of the World as well as time over while gains of women from development were minimal and adjudge temporal. Consequently, the entire process intensified existing gender inequalities even in the period of national propensity. Indisputably, Gender though can not be changed; the ratio of variance can be changed positively by government policy, education, media images and opinion leaders. For example, the degree to which women actually participate in and contribute to the production process is highly dependent on their marital status, on whether they have small children and on whether they have to care for other persons in their households. However, men's participation in and contribution to the production process are also affected by these factors, but not in a constraining way.

Impressively, other differences between men and women exist in the areas of income earnings, life expectancy, educational attainment can be seen, felt, measured and readdressed but other differences and the causes lie in what is covered under the term "Gender" which focuses around the idea of an equal distribution of goods and services that are considered socially desirable. The

deviations from this principle can be regarded as social inequalities. The women's challenges in comparison to men's in this respect lie in the persistent structural features of both traditional and also of modern societies.

To make a distinction between mere differences between men and women and inequality, it is necessary to present a definition of Gender-Based inequalities which is not restricted by theoretical assumption: social inequalities consist of socially generated and stable restrictions for social groups to the access of desirable goods and life chances which are accepted in the society.

Objectives of the study

The study sets to:

- (a) Investigate the extent to which gender inequality has affected the self-development of female in Nigerian Universities.
- (b) Identify reasons for low women participation in the Nigerian educational sector.
- (c) Identify and recommend strategies Nigerian tertiary institutions can adopt, to ensure that sufficient female graduates are turned out well equipped to function in diversified fields and thus contribute to nation building.

Research Questions

To be able to achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions are generated.

- (1) Has the nation's present development level any correlation with increased girls and women's participation in education?
- (2) How can location and circumstances of women be traced to social and religious factors as well as national development?
- (3) To what extent has the adoption of United Nations Declaration on elimination of discriminations against women's affirm its support for allocation of integration constraints?
- (4) What programmes should be designed to remove women's social malaise associated with gender?
- (5) Are there other measures separate from equity, social order and social well-being, to be taken to reduce the gender gap in Nigerian Universities?

Importance of the study

For education to effectively and efficiently reduce the gender gap, it has to be shapen to increase the physical, intellectual and moral development or well-being of the individual. Suffice it to say education is the best legacy any parent can bequeath to the child. It is the greatest possession a person can have. With education, the sky is the beginning. However, the study will be useful in that the result from the treated samples may likely increase good physical development as a result of education given to the child.

The study is also important in that, the child's intellectual; development would be increased due to the level of education he has acquired and moral and attitudinal development of the child may increase as a result of good education.

Another significant importance of the study is the contribution emanating from women's education to family life, to the society and her ability to develop and broaden their minds, fill the gaps of the disadvantaged girl child who dropped out of school, prepare young adolescents and adults to cope with domestic work and family life and finally be of good citizens.

Theoretical framework

Sociological theory's explanation of social inequalities was one of the core tasks of class theories which had its foundation from the theoretical tradition of Karl Marx and Max Weber, accordingly society is composed of several clearly definable major groups which are hierarchically related to each other. The hierarchy manifests itself in equal access to life chances in different groups and perhaps only partially in the development of common attitudes and social identity within these groups.

However, discussions about inequalities and their exclusion from mainstream theories began in the 1970's as a consequence of women's movement and the growing discourse.

Put differently, is the influential formulation in class theory by Schumpeter (1953) who expressly stated that "the family, not the physical person...is the

true individual in class theory”. This position apparently defined the direction that further sociological theory and research would take; husbands, integration in the workplace, determined the class status of their families as their representatives.

Similarly, though the feminist scientists negates the application of research into gender-specific discrimination within the sociological theory. They developed various approaches for overcoming the existing unsatisfactory theoretical solution which had the first comprehending attempt in unequal social situation of men and women concentrated in the concept of “patriarchy”.

Agreeing with the above is Walby (1990), who defines patriarchy as “a system of social structures and social practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.

Analysis of data

Three Thousand Three Hundred and Seventy Three {3373} Students admitted in Babcock University in 2004/2005 were the sample of this study. It also made special reference to the institutions registry achieves various departments of study, state of origin of students, different levels of study and enrolment list within the specified year 2004/2005.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Out of the 3373 students on enrolment in the year 2004/2005 academic year, 1802 representing 53.4% were female indicating that there was no gender discrimination or inequality in the institution. This is due to the fact that the institutions management was aware of the attendant problems attracted by gender inequality. 1570 were male students representing 46.5% while 1 student was untraceable in the system. This might be a case of withdrawal due to certain factors. (School fees, illness, death etc)

Table 1: **Cumulative Percentage of Female-Male enrolment in the specified academic year 2004/2005.**

Gender

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	1802	53.4	53.4	53.4
Male	1570	46.5	46.6	100.0
Total	3372	100.0	100.0	
Missing on system	1	0		
New Total	3373	100.0		

Source: Babcock University Activities, 2004/2005 Academic year

Departments Gender Crosstabulation avails different Departmental Courses with the total number of female-male students. In the Department of Nursing, there were 186 female and 38 male students while we had no female student in the theology, Economics had 169 female, 155 male, Biochemistry 63 female

and 57 male respectively, Accounting 208 female, 139 male. Marketing had 50 female and 64 male while Public Administration had 88 female to 59 male, Mass Communication had 151 female, 26 male ILD had 145 female to 79 male during the 2004/2005 session. Other notable department which had more female than male were Business Administration, English Language, IRM, Banking and Finance, History, Public Health and French.

Table 2 Departments Gender Crosstabular Enrolment by Departments.

Departments	GENDER		Total
	Female	Male	
Nursing	186	38	224
Theology	----	92	92
Economics	169	155	324
Biochemistry	64	57	121
Accounting	208	139	347
Marketing	50	64	114
Public Admin	88	59	147
Mass Comm.	151	26	177
ILD	145	79	224
Microbiology	52	59	111
Business Administration	98	92	190
C. Tech	55	158	213
English	65	9	74
CIS	79	139	218
IRM	43	28	71
Banking/Fin	101	54	155
Computer Sci.	76	132	208
Political Sci.	54	85	139
Agric Sci.	16	46	62
History	66	33	99
Public Health	33	25	58
French	3	1	4
Total	1802	1570	3372

Table 3: Students Countries and States of Origin-Gender Cross Tabulation

GENDER			
Country/State	Female	Male	Total
Abia	129	140	269
Anambra	26	26	52
Balyeisa	6	3	9
Benue	1	7	8
Cameroon *	2	1	3
Cross River	4	1	5
Delta	83	69	152
Ebonyi	3	7	10
Edo	46	49	95
Ekiti	157	138	295
Akwa Ibom	25	26	51
Enugu	7	3	10
Ghana *	4	8	12
Guinea *	-	1	1
Imo	42	34	76
Kaduna	6	10	16
Kano	1	-	1
Kogi	21	24	45
Kwara	48	35	83
Lagos	158	149	307
Liberia *	2	-	2
Ogun	416	350	766
Ondo	157	119	276
Osun	222	161	383
Oyo	168	129	297
Plateau	24	26	50
Rivers	39	46	85
Rwanda *	2	-	2
Senegal *	-	1	1
Taraba	-	2	2
Togo *	-	1	1
Adamawa	2	-	2
Nasarawa	1	2	3
Niger	-	1	1
Bornu	-	1	1
Total	1802	1570	3372

Source: Babcock University, Registry Archives 2004/2005 Academic Year. African Countries.

The table above shows students enrolment from seven different West African Countries and States in Nigeria for the year 2004/2005. Ogun State has the largest male and female students enrolled during the specified year with a total of 766 students, 416 female and 350 male. The reason is that the institution of study is located in Ogun State. However, Ghana tops the list of foreign countries enrolment with 4 female and 8 male students during the year of study 2004/2005.

Table 4 Students Enrolment by levels of study.

Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 100	1019	30.2	30.2	30.2
200	843	25.0	25.0	55.2
300	725	21.5	21.5	76.7
400	752	22.3	22.3	99.0
500	34	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	3373	100.0	100.0	

Source: Babcock University Archives 2004/2005 Academic Year

It can be seen that all levels of study were enrolled for by the students during the specified year 2004/2005 session with a total of 3373 students' altogether.

Table 4 reflects 30.2% of the total male and female students who were in their first year, that is, 100 levels while only 21.5% male and female were in 300 level. However, only 1.0% of the total male and female in Babcock University was in 500 level during the specified 2004/2005 academic year.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There is no doubt that the government is now committed to the full integration of women into the development process to enhance their capacities for improved economic, social and political status. This study on gender inequality in Nigerian Universities, Babcock University, in perspective exposes gender inequality as anti-women and pro-men, however the Babcock University, Ilishan, Remo chosen for the study has proven this assertion wrong by asserting that there is no female discrimination observed in the quality of education acquired, students' status (being an indigene or not) and course allocation. Apparently, from the data collected and analyzed, there are more female than male in most of the departments and courses of study in the specified 2004/2005 academic session.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are being made, so that Nigeria and the entire continent can benefit maximally from realizing that;

- (1) The underdevelopment of women in any society is almost always synonymous with the society's underdevelopment
- (2) The development of women should be given priority in Governments attempts to restructure the economy.

- (3) Nigerian Universities should endeavour to borrow a leaf from Babcock University by encouraging more female students to enroll into the science courses.
- (4) Nigerian Universities should help stop violence against female students by protecting them against sexual harassments and abuse.
- (5) Nigerian Universities should help build self esteem in the female students by allowing them the freedom in choice of courses
- (6) Female students in Nigerian Universities should be inclined and equipped as well as versed in any subject of discussion- be it, Arts, Social Sciences, Sciences and General Education.
- (7) Female Students in Nigerian Universities should know and realize their position as future wife, mothers and leaders and therefore excel in their various fields of study.
- (8) Female students in Nigerian Universities should be encouraged like their make counterparts through Equity, Social Order and well being programmes, principles and policies.

CONCLUSION

The extent to which the gender inequality battle against women is won depends on the way government and non-governmental agencies promotes programmes and measures through schooling and education, in particular, Nigerian Universities by putting into the curriculum and course contents of course

of study, to replace deleterious practices, images, stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices against women.

While the campaign continues to wax stronger to eradicate female inequality, the future holds better opportunity for the female students in Nigerian Universities.

This can be achieved through appropriate changes in socialization patterns, gender inequality enlightenment through mass media and formal and informal education.

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