GENDER EQUITY, DYNAMICS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

A Festschrift in Honor Of

PROF. JOSEPHINE E. ANENE-OKEAKWA

Provost, Federal College of Education (Technical)

Asaba Delta State (2019-2026)

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PROF. JOSEPHINE E. ANENE-OKEAKWA

NCE (Home Econs), BSc (Ed) (Home Econs) DELSU, MSc (Home Econs) UNN, PhD (Home Econs) UNN

Provost, Federal College of Education (Technical)
Asaba, Delta State (2019-2026)

...A Scholar cum Administrator Par Excellence

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Dedication

Dedicated - To God Almighty for the charisma and inspiration to undertake this huge task;
To our dear staff and students for dedication and commitment to the ideals of the College;
To family and friends of Prof (Mrs) J.E. Anene-Okeakwa for their support and goodwill.

Acknowledgements

The Editorial Team appreciates the Almighty God for the courage and inspiration to undertake this daunting task. It is not by our power nor by might, but by the special grace of God. We equally appreciate the College Management for the confidence reposed in us and opportunity to serve in this capacity.

The production of this Festschrift would not have been possible without the dogged and concerted efforts of the various contributors. We appreciate the in-depth research carried out on the various subject areas. The Team of Editors have been awesome. We specifically appreciate our Consulting Editors for bringing their wealth of scholarship to bear on this project.

We remain indebted to Friends of the College and our Development Partners who partly sponsored the production of this Book. Finally we appreciate staff and students of the College for overwhelming support and cooperation.

To God be the glory!

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FOREWORD

It is with profound joy and deep scholarly admiration that I write this Foreword to the Festschrift titled *Gender Equity, Dynamics in Educational Leadership and Other Contemporary Issues*, published in honour of Professor Josephine Emebiziogo Anene-Okeakwa, an accomplished educationist, transformative leader, and former Provost of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, where she served with distinction from April 2019 to March 2026. It is interesting to note that I met her first in October, 2021when I visited the famous Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba as a Lead-paper presenter at a conference floated by the Directorate of Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) of the College. Prof J.E. Anene-Okeakwa's composure, comportment, inclusive disposition attracted me; and I fell in love with administrative acumen.

Prof Josephine Emebiziogo Anene-Okeakwa's journey from humble beginnings to becoming a towering figure in Nigerian education is both inspiring and instructive. Originating from Ogbe-Ogonogo Market in Asaba, where she engaged in humble trading activities in her youth, she rose through dedication, discipline, and vision to assume some of the highest responsibilities in academic leadership. Her story resonates deeply with the themes of equity and access that are central to this Festschrift, demonstrating that talent combined with tenacity can overcome social and structural barriers.

Prof J.E Anene-Okeakwa's professional journey remains emblematic of dedication to institutional growth. Her association with the College began humbly when she served as a Youth Corps member at the then Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba. Recognized early for her intellectual depth, discipline, and administrative promise, she was retained after her national service, thus beginning a lifelong commitment to teacher education, technical advancement, and academic leadership. Rising through the ranks by merit, resilience, and scholarly productivity, she eventually assumed the highest office in the institution as Provost, becoming a symbol of visionary leadership within Nigeria's Colleges of Education system.

Her tenure as Provost coincided with a critical period in Nigerian tertiary education, marked by funding constraints, policy transitions, accreditation pressures, digital transformation, and growing demands for equity and inclusion. Under her stewardship, the College strengthened its academic programmes, deepened its quality assurance mechanisms, enhanced staff development initiatives, and promoted gender-sensitive administrative practices. She consistently demonstrated that leadership is not merely positional authority but a moral responsibility grounded in fairness, accountability, and service.

The thematic orientation of this Festschrift mirrors the intellectual convictions and administrative priorities that defined Professor J.E Anene-Okeakwa's career. The opening chapters foreground gender equality and scientific literacy, setting the tone for a volume that interrogates how inclusive educational systems can drive sustainable national development. Discussions on gender equity in science education, chemistry laboratory management, literacy education, and technical and vocational enrolment dynamics resonate strongly with her longstanding advocacy for women's participation in STEM and technical education.

Equally compelling are the chapters that examine gender and leadership accountability in educational institutions. From ethical leadership beyond representation to administrative politics and quality assurance, contributors interrogate the moral and structural dimensions of leadership—areas in which Prof J.E. Anene-Okeakwa's example remains instructive. She championed transparent governance, inclusive decision-making, and the mentoring of younger academics, particularly women navigating leadership pathways in tertiary institutions.

The breadth of this volume is remarkable. It extends beyond formal educational leadership into agribusiness management, sustainable chemistry, environmental leadership, home management, economics education, library science, conflict resolution, digital transformation, artificial intelligence integration, and even national security concerns. Such intellectual diversity reflects the holistic understanding of education that Prof J.E. Anene-Okeakwa embodies: education as a transformative ecosystem influencing family life, economic productivity, technological innovation, social justice, and national stability.

Notably, several chapters focus on mentorship, teacher professional development, quality assurance, and institutional resilience—areas central to her administration. Throughout her years as Provost, she encouraged research funding initiatives, strengthened mentoring frameworks, and supported staff pursuing advanced scholarship. Her leadership style combined firmness with empathy, administrative competence with maternal guidance, and strategic planning with moral clarity.

This Festschrift also foregrounds contemporary issues such as digitalization of academic libraries, ICT integration in teaching and learning, virtual information services, AI-driven skill development, and cyber security resilience. These themes speak to the features of 21st-century educational leadership realities that Prof J.E. Anene-Okeakwa navigated with foresight. Her administration embraced technological modernization and institutional repositioning in response to emerging global standards.

The repeated emphasis on gender equity throughout this volume is particularly fitting. As a female leader in a historically male-dominated technical education environment, Prof J.E. Anene-Okeakwa did not merely occupy office, she expanded the possibilities of representation. Her journey from Youth Corps member to Provost illustrates the transformative potential of institutional inclusion. She

stands as a testament to the fact that leadership excellence transcends gender while simultaneously benefiting from gender-sensitive perspectives.

Beyond policy and administration, this Festschrift acknowledges her humanity, her mentorship of colleagues, encouragement of younger scholars, commitment to professional ethics, and unwavering dedication to institutional advancement. Leadership, in her example, is relational as much as structural. It is about building people as much as building systems.

The chapters addressing women's representation, early childhood education leadership, agribusiness equity, aquaculture value chains, political participation, and the moral obligation of gender equity further situate this volume within Nigeria's broader developmental discourse. They remind us that educational leadership cannot be isolated from socio-economic transformation. Prof J.E. Anene-Okeakwa's career reflects this interconnected vision.

A Festschrift is more than a commemorative volume; it is an intellectual tribute. It gathers diverse scholarly voices to honour a life of service and to extend the honouree's ideas into future conversations. In this regard, *Gender Equity, Dynamics in Educational Leadership and Other Contemporary Issues* succeeds admirably. The seventy-two chapters collectively advance discourse on inclusive leadership, ethical governance, scientific literacy, mentorship, institutional resilience, and sustainable development.

As readers engage this volume, they will encounter research-informed arguments, philosophical reflections, empirical studies, and policy analyses. Together, these contributions form a tapestry of scholarship that celebrates not only an individual but also a set of values: equity, accountability, innovation, mentorship, and transformative leadership.

Prof Josephine E. Anene-Okeakwa's legacy at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba will endure in strengthened structures, empowered staff, mentored scholars, and inspired students. More importantly, it will endure in the continuing pursuit of gender-responsive, ethically grounded, and forward-looking educational leadership across Nigeria and beyond. May this Festschrift serve both as a tribute and as a call to action, challenging present and future leaders to embrace inclusive governance, promote scientific literacy, and uphold the moral imperatives of equity in all spheres of education.

It is therefore with great honour that I commend this volume to scholars, administrators, policymakers, and all who are committed to advancing gender equity and dynamic educational leadership in our time.

Prof Victory Uchechukwu Dienye
Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education,
University of Education,
Choba, Port Harcourt

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CURRICULUM VITAE

PROFESSOR J.E. ANENE-OKEAKWA

Provost, Federal College Of Education (Tech), Asaba

NAME IN FULL:	Anene-Okeakwa, Josephine Emebiziogo
MARITAL STATUS :	Widow
NUMBER OF CHILDREN:	Six
DATE OF BIRTH:	14th March, 1961
PLACE OF BIRTH:	Asaba
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Oshimili South Local Government Area
STATE OF ORIGIN:	Delta State
CURRENT POSTAL ADDRESS:	Department of Home Economics Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.
PERMANENT HOME ADDRESS:	No. 5 Charles Azikiwe Street, Behind Bovas Filling Station, off USA Road, Akwuose, Asaba, Delta State.

1. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ATTENDED WITH DATES:
   i. University of Nigeria, Nsukka 2011-2016
   ii. University of Nigeria, Nsukka 1995-1999
   iii. Bendel State University, Abraka Campus 1987-1990
   iv. Bendel State University, Abraka Campus 1984-1987
   v. Asaba Girls Grammar School, Asaba 1975-1981
   vi. Federal College of Education (Technical),Asaba 2008

2. ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS WITH DATES:

i.	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)	2016
ii.	Masters in Home Economics Education (M.Ed)	1999
iii.	Bachelor of Science in Home Economics Education [B.Sc(Ed)]	1990
iv.	Nigeria Certificate in Education in Home Economics (N.C.E)	1988
v.	West African School Certificate (WASC)	1981
vi.	Certificate in Information and Communication Technology	2008

3. MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS/BODIES

i. Fellow, Chartered Institute of Public Management of Nigeria
ii. Member, Home Economics Teachers Association of Nigeria
iii. Member, Home Economics Council of Nigeria
iv. Member, Home Economics Research Association of Nigeria
v. Member, Nutrition Society of Nigeria
vi. Member, Nigerian Vocational Association
vii. Member, Nigerian Association for Educational Media and Technology
viii. Member, Women in Colleges of Education
ix. Certified Teacher, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria

4. WORK EXPERIENCE WITH DATES

i. National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)-1990-1991:

Lecturer, Department of Home Economics Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.

Duties included:

1. Mounting home economics courses in the department
2. Lecturing all the home economics courses
3. Counseling students
4. Computing students' semester results

ii. Assistant Lecturer – (1991-1993):

Overseer, Department of Home Economics Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.

Duties included:

- Administering the department
- Lecturing all the home economics courses for one year
- Computing students' semester results
- Attending school board meetings
- Attending academic board meetings

iii. Lecturer III – (1993-1995):

Acting Head, Department of Home Economics Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.
Duties included:

- Administering the department
- Holding meetings with staff
- Making proposals to management
- Counselling staff and students
- Lecturing home economics courses
- Representing the department in committees
- Attending school board meetings
- Attending academic board meetings
- Supervising students' projects

iv. Lecturer II – (1995-1998):

Acting Head, Department of Home Economics Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.
Duties included:

- Administering the department
- Holding meetings with staff
- Making proposals to management
- Counselling staff and students
- Lecturing home economics courses
- Representing the department in committees
- Establishment of staff demonstration nursery/primary school
- Attending school board meetings
- Attending academic board meetings
- Supervising students' projects

v. Lecturer I – (1998-2001):

Lecturer, Department of Home Economics Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.
Duties included:

- Lecturing home economics courses
- Moderating Year one home economics courses
- Attending departmental meetings
- Supervising students' projects
- Coordinating staff demonstration nursery and primary school
- Supervising students on teaching practice

vi. Senior Lecturer– (2001-2004):

Lecturer, Department of Home Economics Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.
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- Lecturing home economics courses
- Moderating Year one home economics courses
- Attending departmental meetings
- Supervising students' projects
- Attending staff demonstration nursery and primary school committee meetings
- Supervising students on teaching practice

1. **Principal Lecturer-(2004-2007):**
   Lecturer, Department of Home Economics Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.
   Duties included:
   - Lecturing home economics courses
   - Moderating Year two home economics courses
   - Attending departmental meetings
   - Supervising students' projects
   - Attending staff demonstration nursery and primary school committee meetings
   - Supervising students on teaching practice

v. **Principal Lecturer-(2009-2010):**
   Sabbatical Leave, Department of Home Economics, College of Education, Agbor.
   Duties included:
   - Lecturing home economics courses.
   - Attending departmental meetings
   - Supervising students' projects

vi. **Chief Lecturer-(2011-2014):**
   Dean, School of Vocational Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.
   Duties included:
   - Administering the school
   - Supervising the departments in the school
   - Representing the school in management meetings
   - Heading the committee of deans in the college
   - Establishing the welfare scheme of the school

- Supervising students on teaching practice
- Counseling the staff and students in the school
- Chairing the School board
- Supervising students on teaching practice

vii. **Chief Lecturer-(2014-2016):**
Deputy Provost, Federal College of Education (Tech), Asaba, Delta State.
Duties included:
- Holding forth for the Provost in his absence
- Representing the Provost in meetings within and outside the college
- Attending top management meetings
- Chairing committees and sub committees in the college
- Training militants

viii. **Chief Lecturer-(2016-2018):**
Lecturer, Department of Home Economics Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.
Duties included:
- Lecturing home economics courses.

1. Supervising students' projects
2. Attending academic board meetings
3. Attending departmental meetings
4. Attending school board meetings
5. Attending college committee meetings
6. Supervising students on teaching practice

ix. **Professor/Research Professorial Fellow** of Home Economics and Hospitality Management by British American Open University of California, 27th November, 2023.

5. **OTHER IMPORTANT POSITIONS HELD IN THE COLLEGE**
   1. Hostel Warden for Hostel D, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State -1993-1997.
   2. Member, Examination Malpractice Committee, School of Technical Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State -1993-1996.
   3. Treasurer, College of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU), Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State chapter -1994-1997.

4. Member, Consultancy and Applied Research Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State -1994
5. Member, Matriculation Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State -1995-1996
6. Member, College Security Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 1995-1996
7. Coordinator, Staff Demonstration Nursery/Primary School, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State - 1997-1999
8. Member, Committee on Revised Minimum Standard, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State - 1997
9. Secretary/Member, Staff Demonstration Nursery/Primary School Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State - 1999-2001
10. Member, Convocation Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State - 1999-200
11. Member, Staff Demonstration Nursery, Primary and Secondary School Management Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State - 2001-2004
12. Member, Staff Demonstration Nursery, Primary and Secondary School Management Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State - 2007-2009
13. Member, Conference Planning Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State - 2007-2009
14. Member, Committee on Family Life and Emerging Health Issues, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State - 2008-2010
15. Member, Central Examination Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State - 2008-2010
16. Chairman, Committee to Assess Mrs. F.N.Ebirim for Promotion to Chief Instructor, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2008
17. Member, Committee on Internally Generated Revenue, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State -2011
18. Member, Conversion Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2011-2014
19. Members, Induction Ceremony Committee for Teachers Registration Council (TRCN), Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2011
20. Member, Committee on Academic Calendar for the Degree Programme, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State in Affiliation with University of Benin, Benin-City – 2012
21. Member, Academic Calendar Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2012

22. Chairman, Students' Dress Code Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2012
23. Member, Committee on Four Year Strategic Plan for the Education Sector, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2012
24. Member, Staff Manual Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2012
25. Chairman, COEASU Conference Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2012
26. Member, Tenders Board, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2015-2016
27. Chairman, Fixed Assets Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2014-2016
28. Chairman, Central Examination Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2014-2016
29. Chairman, Committee for Merit/Long Service Award and Council Members' Send Forth, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State-2014
30. Chairman, End of Year Party, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2014-2016
31. Member, 13th -23rd Convocation Ceremony Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State -2014
32. Chairperson, Sub-Committee on Fund Raising for 13th -23rd Convocation Ceremony, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2014
33. Chairperson, Sub-Committee on Entertainment for 13th -23rd Convocation Ceremony, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State – 2014
34. Chairperson, Sub-committee on Decorations for 13th-23rd Convocation Ceremony, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State - 2014
35. Chairperson, Committee on Hosting the 74th Meeting of Committee of Provosts of Colleges of Education in Nigeria, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State –2014
36. Member, Appraisal Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State –2015
37. Chairman, Office/Furniture Allocation Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State–2015-2017
38. Chairman, Public Toilet Building Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State –2015
39. Supervisor, Colitech Venture, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State –2015-2018

40. Member, Teaching Practice Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State –2016-2018
41. Member, Governing Council, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State –2017-2018
42. Member, 30th Anniversary Committee, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State –2017
43. Chairman, Committee on Ethics and Privileges, College of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU), Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State chapter - 2018.
44. Member, Governing Council, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba (2017 – 2019)
45. Deputy Provost (2014 –2016)
46. Chairperson, Women in Colleges of Education Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Chapter (2019- date);
47. **Provost,** Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba (2019 – date)

6. SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COLLEGE SYSTEM

i. Mounting of Home Economics Education Department, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State and as pioneer staff, taught all the courses alone for the session-1990
ii. Establishing the Staff Demonstration Nursery and Primary School, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State –1995
iii. External Moderator, Department of Home Economics, College of Education, Warri, Delta State-2008-2013
iv. External Moderator, Department of Home Economics, College of Education, Warri, Delta State -2008-2013
v. External Moderator, Department of Home Economics, Federal College of Education, (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State -2014-2018
vi. External Moderator, Department of Home Economics, College of Education, Agbor, Delta State -2015-2018
vii. External Assessor for Promotion to Chief Lecturer, College of Education, Ekhiadolor, Benin-City, Edo State -2016
viii. External Assessor for Promotion to Principal Lecturer, College of Education, Agbor, Delta State -2017
ix. External Assessor for Promotion to Chief Lecturer, College of Education, Agbor, Delta State -2018

7. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY AND COUNTRY

i. Vice Chairman, Laity Council, St. Patrick's Church, West End, Asaba-1995 – 2000
ii. Vice Chairman, Harvest Committee, St. Patrick's Church, West End, Asaba – 1999

iii. Member, Board of Trustees, Better Life for African Women, Delta State Chapter – 2004
iv. Facilitator to a 6-day Capacity Building Workshop on the Practical Food of PLWHAS/PLWHIV and MOS – 2008
v. Deaconess, Living Faith Church Worldwide (aka Winners Chapel), Asaba – 2007-2018
vi. Member, School Board, Kingdom Heritage School, Living Faith Church Worldwide (aka Winners Chapel), Asaba – 2010-2012
vii. National Election Collation Officer, Ward Five, Oshimili South Local Government Area - April, 2011.
viii. Chairperson, Faith Academy Governing Council, Living Faith Church Worldwide (aka Winners Chapel), Asaba – 2015.
ix. Member, Local Church Council, Living Faith Church Worldwide (aka Winners Chapel), Asaba – 2014-2015.
x. Member, Building Sub-Committee, Living Faith Church Worldwide (aka Winners Chapel), Asaba – 2014-2015.
xi. Matron, Teachers' Social Circle, Asaba – 2015-2018.
xii. Member, Signs and Wonders Club International, Asaba – 2013-2016.
xiii. Vice President, Signs and Wonders Club International, Asaba –2016-2018
xiv. Returning Officer for House of Representatives in the April 2019 Election;
xv. Chairperson, Asaba Development Union World Wide Palliative Project (Food Bank) during the COVID-19 Pandemic among others (2019 – date)
xvi. Matron, Red Cross Society Delta State.
xvii. Ambassador of Community Immunity International Course on COVID-19
xviii. Doctorate degree in Administration (Decision making Process) from Rescue Mission Theological University in 2020.
xix. 5th President, Jexoban Lions Club, Asaba (2022-2023)
xx. President Signs & Wonders Club International, Asaba.
xxi. Senatorial Elections Returning Officer for Delta North Senatorial District in February 2023 General Elections
xxii. Gubernatorial Elections Collation Officer for Oshimili South Local Government Area in March 2023 General Elections

8. AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

(a) Awards

i. Provost's prize for overall best academic performance in Vocational and Technical Studies, Bendel State University, Abraka Campus -1987
ii. Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU), Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Chapter Meritorious Award in recognition of my services to the growth of the College and contribution to the development of my vocation - 3rd April, 2013.

iii. Nigerian Peace Magazine Leadership Ambassador Award for being "Distinguished in Administrative Excellence, Honesty, Hard work, Transparency and Accountability." Presented in 2014 based on my Social-Economic contributions towards the Development of Nigeria.

iv. National Waves Newspaper Magazine Golden Award for Achievers in Outstanding Leadership - 2014.

v. Nigerian Print Journalism Development Organization (Publishers of the Press-Golden) Award for Excellence as the Best Deputy Provost of the Year 2014.

vi. Students Union Government, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Award as "Mother of All Students"- 2014.

vii. School of Vocational Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Excellence Service Award in recognition of excellent contributions to the growth and development of Vocations -2016.

viii. Students' Union Government, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Humanitarian Service Award - 2016.

ix. Anioma Media Network Award of Excellence as Anioma Outstanding Female Educationist of The Year 2016 - 26th March, 2016.

x. Distinguished Alumni Award from Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (2019).

xi. Award of Excellence from National Association of Women in Colleges of Education (2019)

xii. National Merit Award from Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (2019)

xiii. The Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Nigeria award of honorary fellow of the Institute. 17th October, 2019

xiv. Leadership Style Award by the Committee of College Librarians in Nigeria (2020)

xv. Academic Fellowship Award from Home Economics Practitioners Association of Nigeria (HEPAN, 2021)

xvi. Award of Excellence as an Extra Ordinary Role Model, and Outstanding Personality of the Year 2020 and Face of Hope by Gospel Alive Nigeria

xvii. Honored by Delta State Government as one of the Most Outstanding Deltans in 2021.

xviii. Meritorious Service AWARD by ODUA Staff Association FCE(T), Asaba, in recognition of her efforts in knowledge acquisition and societal development. 4th December 2021.

xix. Time Africa Magazine Award of One of 500 Most Influential Women in Africa- 30th March, 2021

xx. Industrial & Technical Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka Appreciation Plague as 1st Annual Conference Lead Paper Presenter. 5th August, 2021

xxi. Excellent Service Award by Committee of Deans FCE(T), Asaba, on the occasion of 3rd year service anniversary in recognition of her contributions to the growth and development of the College. 15th June, 2022.

xxii. Excellent Service Award by School of Secondary Education (Technical), on the occasion of 3rd Year Service Anniversary in recognition of her contributions to the growth and development of the College. 15th June, 2022.

xxiii. Excellent Service Award by School of Secondary Education (Vocational), on the occasion of 3rd Year Service Anniversary in recognition of her contributions to the growth and development of the College. 15th June, 2022.

xxiv. Asaba indigenes in FCE(T) Asaba, Award of Excellence on the occasion of 3rd Year Service Anniversary in recognition of her contributions to the growth and development of the College. 15th June, 2022.

xxv. Award of honor as Noble Woman of the Year by BA Global Consult in recognition of her impact in youths and women empowerment and peace promotion in Nigeria 30th October, 2022

xxvi. Face of Philanthropy award by Advocates for good governance in Nigeria (AFGGN) July-December 2022

xxvii. National Association of Nigerian Colleges of Education Students (NANCES) National Meritorious Service Award as Outstanding Provost of the year 2023 – 19th September, 2023.

xxviii. Nigeria Association for Physical Health Education, Recreation, Sports and Dance (NAPHER-SD) Award of Honor in appreciation for support and contribution to the association – 21st September, 2023.

xxix. Committee of Public Relations Executives and Information Officers of Colleges of Education In Nigeria (COPRECOEN) Award of Excellence AS THE Most Outstanding Provost for the Year 2023 for her giant strides in leadership - 9th October, 2023.

xxx. Education Student Association of Nigeria (ESAN) award of HONOR as mother of inestimable value to ESAN and the College Community. 4th August, 2023

xxxi. FECOTECH CLASS '98 Award of Recognition being the first female Provost of the College, in recognition of her contributions to teaching/learning and development of the College. 4th November, 2023

xxxii. A prestigious Ambassadorial Award and Community Chieftaincy Honor as YEYE ASOJU ALATUNSE by His Imperial Majesty, Ooni Adeyeye Enitan Babatunde Ogunwusi, CFR, The Ooni of Ife on 9th November, 2023.

xxxiii. Conferment of a prestigious Chieftaincy Title of OLINZELE AHABA, a highly prestigious honor in Asaba, by His Royal Majesty Asagba, (Prof) Chike Edozien (Asagba of Asaba) on 16th December, 2023.

xxxiv. Special Merit Award by the highly distinguished Ahaba '88 Club of Nigeria in recognition of her meritorious services to the Academia and the Community on 26th December, 2023

xxxv. Honored as Patroness of Precious Jewels Association, Asaba, with Award of Excellence on 25th February, 2024.

xxxvi. Leadership Excellence Award in recognition of her visionary leadership at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, by the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Talent Development, 6th March, 2024

(b) **Recognitions**

1. Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Top Management's commendation for the Succinct Report of the Dress Code Committee which I am the Chairman – 2013.
2. Commendation by the Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Expanded Management Committee (in place of Council) for commitment and dedication to duty as Deputy Provost, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba – 2016.
3. Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Top Management's commendation for orderly allocation of offices and furniture to Staff – 2016

9. **ACADEMIC AWARD**

Awarded and inducted as Professor/Research Professorial Fellow of Home Economics and Hospitality Management by British American Open University of California on 27th November, 2023.

10. **PRESENT EMPLOYMENT**

1. **EMPLOYER:** Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State
2. **STATUS:** Chief Lecturer
3. **SALARY:** CONPCASS 9

11. **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Travelling, Cooking, Reading, Listening to music and Sports

12. **PUBLICATIONS**

(a) BOOKS:

1. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2010). *About the family.* Benin-city: Ambik publishers.
2. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2011). *Textiles and clothing construction.* Benin-city: Ambik publishers.

(b) CHAPTERS IN BOOKS:

1. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2011). Characteristics of vocational education. In J.E. Anene-
2. Okeakwa (ed.) *Essentials of entrepreneurship in vocational education*. Asaba: Ekecy publishers.
3. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2011). Concept of entrepreneurship and types of entrepreneurship. In J.E.Anene-Okeakwa (ed.) *Essentials of entrepreneurship invocational education*. Asaba: Ekecy publishers.
4. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2011). Opportunity recognition, exploitation and growth venture. In J.E.Anene-Okeakwa (ed.) *Essentials of entrepreneurship in vocational education*. Asaba: Ekecy publishers.
5. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2011). Management and administration of small scale enterprises. In J.E.Anene-Okeakwa (ed.) *Essentials of entrepreneurship in vocational education*. Asaba: Ekecy publishers.
6. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2011). Product development in home economics. InJ.E.Anene-Okeakwa (ed.) *Essentials of entrepreneurship in vocationaleducation*. Asaba: Ekecy publishers.
7. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2011). Record keeping in home economics. In J.E. Anene-Okeakwa (ed.) *Essentials of entrepreneurship invocational education*. Asaba:Ekecy publishers.

(c)EDITORSHIP OF BOOKS/JOURNALS:

1. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (ed) (2011). Essentials of entrepreneurship invocational education. Asaba: Ekecy publishers.
2. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (ed.) (2017). *Journal of research in vocational and technical education*.1, (1).

(d) JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS:

1) Okwelle, P.C. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (1995). Students' and educators' perception of Handouts in higher institutions. *Nigerian Journal of curriculum and instructions*.1, (1), 68-72.
2) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (1996). Teaching skills in home economics education. In P.O.Nwaokolo & D.O.Otubelu (eds.) Effective Teaching: A book of readings.Onitsha: Kmensua Educational Publishers.
3) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (1998). Effective teaching of home economics education for technological development. *TheAsaba educator-Technical and science education journal*.1, (1), 55-62.
4) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2000). Gender disparity in Nigerian educational system. *The Asaba educator-Technical and scienceeducation journal*.1, (1), 83-99.
5) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2000). Problems of wastage in home economics education in Nigeria. In S.O. Oraifo, P.E.O. Nwaokolo & D. Igborgbor(eds.)

Refocusing education in Nigeria: A book of readings.Benin-city: Sylva Influence publishers.

6) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2002). Parents and drug abuse among youths in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. *Journal of research in education*. 2, (1&2), 10-13.

7) Iwuanyanwu, C.N. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2000). Basic issues in accomplishing the mission of primary education in universal basic education. *Journal of multi-disciplinary studies*. 52-56.

8) Uzoka, F.A. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2002). Home economics and community health development in Delta State of Nigeria. Journal of research issues in home economics. 1, (1), 242-246.

9) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2006). Comparative analysis of two methods of teaching textile design in Nigerian secondary schools. *Journal of Research in Education*. 1, (3), 61-64.

10) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2006). Caring for people living with HIV/AIDS. *Nigeria Journal of Teacher Education and Teaching*. 2, (3), 212-218

11) Nwabudike, C.M. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2006). Technical teacher curriculum in Nigeria: A review. *Akoka Journal of Vocational Education*. 5, (1),53-58.

12) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2007). Household food security and individual nutrition status: Implication for home economics education. *Asaba Journal of Education Studies*.2, (3), 71-76.

13) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2007). Health and nutritional issues for young women: Implication for home economics education. *Journal of Academics*.2, (3),134-143.

14) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2008). The place of home economics in nutrition and control of disease. *Journal of Qualitative Education*.57-61.

15) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2009). Iodine deficiency and inadequate nutrition in children and adolescent. *International Journal of Technical and Vocational Education*.1, (1), 85-93.

16) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2009). Food insecurity and nutritional effects on the infant through childhood: Implication for home economics. *Akoka Journal of Vocational Education*. 87-94

17) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2009). Household food security and the nutrition of people living with HIV/AIDS. *Warri Journal of Vocational Education*.2, (1), 119-124

18) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2009). Household food security and unmarried adolescent girls nutrition: Implication for family living education. *International Journal of Arts: Physical Management and SocialScience*.3 & 4, 100-104.

19) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E.& Ikenga, G.U. (2010). Re-branding vocational technical education in Nigeria: An overview. *International Journal of Science, Vocational and Business Studies*.6, (1), 89-95.
20) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2011). HIV and determinants of infant feeding behavior as regards breast feeding and replacement feeding. *The Nigerian Academic Forum. A Multidisciplinary Journal*.20, (1), 52-57
21) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2011). The effectiveness of individualized instruction strategy in clothing construction and alteration. *International Journal of National Association for Research Development*.4,(1), 215-222.
22) Ogbene, A.E., Iwuanyanwu, C.N., Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. & Okafor ,P.(2012). The impact of local diet in managing menopausal syndromes among female staff of Colleges of Education in Delta State to enhance job efficiency. TETFUND.
23) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E; Okafor, P. & Ejinkeonye, U.B. (2012). A study of the causes of Diabetes among the pre-school children in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. *Journal of education, health and technology research*.3, (2), 131-136.
24) Mbah, P.E; Salami, L.I; Akedolu, I.A; Busari, O. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2012). Curbing the proliferation of diabetes and obesity as metabolic errors among households using advocacy and dietary management. Book of Abstract, Nutrition Society of Nigeria. 202-210.
25) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E., Ojogbane, J. A. & Adzande, O.A. (2012). Strategies for the attainment of quality assurance in technical education. *Journal of Business and Vocational Education*. 1, (2), 130-139.
26) Okoh, P.A. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2013). Assessing students' bead making craft skill for self reliance: A reflection of creative art in home economics. *African Journal of Vocational Education*.1, (1), 54-59.
27) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. & Okonkwo, G.A. (2013). Investigation into household food security through food handling and preservation practices among female staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba. *Nigerian Journal of research in vocation and technical education*. 1, (1), 1-6.
28) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E; Chukwurah, M.O; Eze, J.N. & Eze, M.O.(2015). Analysis of best practices and strategies of knowledge entrepreneurship in tertiary vocational education for employability skills in Delta State. *Ghana International journal of home economics*. 4, 62-69.
29) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2016). Strategies for enhancing family support for people living with HIV and AIDS in Delta State, Nigeria. *Doctoral dissertation*. Department of Home Economics and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
30) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E; Chukwurah, M.O; Ahmed, M.& Uzoka, I.O. (2017). Comparative occupational education: A strategy for promoting

entrepreneurship and creativity in Agricultural occupations in technical and vocation education. *Nigerian Journal of home economics*. 6, (1), 76-83

31) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. & Ikenga, G.U. (2017). Fraud and fraud prevention in the management of small and medium scale enterprise: Implication for national development. *Asaba Journal of Business and vocational education*.199-206.

32) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E; Chukwurah, M.O. & Okoh, P.A. (2018). Challenges in provision of family support and receipt of family support by people living with HIV and AIDS in Delta State, Nigeria. Nigeria Journal of home economics. 6, (2), 62-69.

33) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E; Oyibo, O., Chukwukelu, I.S.& Diabua S.C. (2021). Effects of sweet potato (*Ipomea Batata*) production on the empowerment of women farmers in Delta State. African Scholar Journal of Agriculture and Agricultural Tech (JAAT-1) 20(1), 54-66.

34) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E; Chukwukelu, I.S.& Diabua S.C. (2022). Effects of composted manure and NPK fertilizer on growth and yield of maize (*Zea mays L)* and groundnut *(Arachis hypogaea)* intercrop in Asaba, Delta State. International Journal of Agricultural Research and Biotechnology, 10(1), 109-120.

35) Anene-Okeakwa, J.E; Chukwukelu, I.S. & Diabua S.C. (2023). Response of green (*Amarantus L.* spp) to sprinkler and furrow irrigation in Asaba, Delta State. Journal of Renewable Agricultural Technology Research 28(1), 201-212

3. CONFERENCE PAPER PRESENTATIONS

1. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (1996). The need for effective evaluation of home economics programmes for enhanced teacher preparation in the 21st century. Paper presented at the Annual National Conference of Home Economics Teachers' Association of Nigeria held at the International Conference Centre, Abuja from 12th – 15thSeptember.
2. Ekwue, K.C. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (1992). The impact of college industry linkage on the training of vocational students. Paper presented at the 7th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Vocational Association held at Federal College of Education(Technical), Umunze, Anambra State from 25th– 28th November.
3. Okwelle, P.C. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (1994). Students and teaching staff perceptions of handouts in higher institutions of learning. Paper presented at the 1st Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Educational Media and Technology held at Federal College of Education(Technical), Asaba, from 16th – 17th November.
4. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. & Iwuanyanwu, C.N. (2001). Techniques for making demonstration effective in clothing construction laboratory practices. Paper

presented at the National Conference of Nigerian Home Economics Research Association held at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, from5th – 8th March, 2001.

5. Iwuanyanwu, C.N. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2001). Basic horticulture: An essential component of an enriched home management residence experience programme in the new millennium. Paper presented at the National Conference of Nigerian Home Economics Research Association held at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, from 5th – 8th March, 2001.
6. Iwuanyanwu, C.N. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2000). Issues in accomplishing the mission of primary education in universal basic education in the 21st Century. Paper presented at the National Conference organized by Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba in collaboration with Faculty ofEducation, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State held at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba from 7th – 10thMay.
7. Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2001). Wastage in home economics: A national problem. Paper presented at the National Conference on Refocusing Education in Nigeria organized by Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba in collaboration with Institute of Education, University of Benin, Benin-city and Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka and held atFederal College of Education (Technical), Asaba from 27th – 30th November.
8. Asikadi, E. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2003). Restructuring SIWES to meet the national development in the educational system. Paper presented at the 2nd Annual National Conference of National Association for Research Development held on 11th– 15th August.
9. Uzoka, F.A. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2002). The advocacy roles of nutrition and home economics professionals for rural families in Delta State of Nigeria. Paper presented at the National Conference on Emerging Directional Challenges for Home Economics in Nigeria. Research Perspectives organized by Home Economics Research Association of Nigeria and held at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State from 24th – 30th September.
10. Okafor, P.O. & Anene-Okeakwa, J.E. (2001). Nutrition and hypertension. A challenge to the human nutritionist in the new millennium. Paper presented at the 32nd National conference of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria held at the Auditorium of Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Edo State on 28th –30th November.
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i. 7th Annual Conference of Nigerian Vocational Association, held at Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State on 25th -28th 1992.

ii. 1st Annual Conference on "Effective Teaching Through Technology" organized by the Nigeria Association for Educational Media and Technology (NAEMT) held at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, from 16th -17th November, 1994

iii. Annual Conference of Home Economics Teachers Association held at the International Conference Centre, Abuja on 12th – 15th September 1996

iv. 2nd National Conference of Nigerian Home Economics Research Association (NHERA) held at University of Nigeria, Nsukka on 5th -8th March, 2001.

v. 1st Annual National Conference of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba in Collaboration with Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka held at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State from 7th – 10th May 2000. Theme: Universal Basic Education Programme in Nigeria.

vi. National Conference on Refocusing Education in Nigeria organized by Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba in Collaboration with Institute of Education, University of Benin, Benin-city and Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, held at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba from 27th – 30th November, 2001.

vii. 2nd Annual National Conference of National Association for Research Development (NARD) Education and National Development from 11th – 15th August, 2003.

viii. 3rd Annual National Conference of Home Economics Research Association of Nigeria on Emerging Directions and Challenges for Home Economics in Nigeria-Research Perspectives held at University of Nigeria Nsukka from 4th – 7th September, 2002.

ix. 32nd Annual Conference of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria (NSN) held at the Auditorium of Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Edo State from 28th – 30th November, 2001.

x. 6th National Conference of Home Economics Research Association of Nigeria with the Theme – Towards promoting Entrepreneurship Education for Self-Reliance: Perspectives for Home Economics held at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka from 7th – 10th September, 2005.
xi. National Conference of Nigerian Primary and Teacher Education Association on "State and Future of Education in Nigeria held at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba from 13th – 17th June, 2005.
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xiv. Collaborative National Conference of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State and Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State, on Re-engineering Teacher Education in Nigeria, held at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba from 24th – 27th June, 2008.
xv. 4th Home Economics Council Conference held at University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State on Wednesday 15th to Friday 17th July 2009.
xvi. National Conference of School of Vocational Education, College of Education Warri, Delta State, held at the main Auditorium College of Education, Warri from 28th – 30th September, 2009.
xvii. 11th Annual National Conference of Home Economics Research Association of Nigeria, held at Princess Alexandra Auditorium, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria from 15th – 18th September, 2010.
xviii. 1st Annual National Conference of School of Business Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria from 14th - 19th March, 2011.
xix. International Conference of De-Caritas Centre for Studies on Human Development in Africa held at Rivers State University of Education, Port Harcourt in partnership with Better Karma LLC USA from 11th – 13th August, 2010.
xx. International Conference of International Federation for Home Economics held in Sligo, Ireland from 18th – 23rd July, 2010.
xxi. 2nd National Annual Conference of the National Association for Research Development (NARD) on the theme: Education and National Development held on 11th – 15th August, 2003.
xxii. Workshop on Vitamin A Dietary Diversification Programme and Nutrition Education for Schools and Colleges organized by UNICEF at the Gateway Hotel, Ijebu Ode from 23rd – 27th October, 1995.
xxiii. 1st National Home Economics Workshop on "Improvisation in the teaching of Home Economics in Post Primary Schools" organised by Science Teachers

Association of Nigeria (STAN) at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State from 26th April – 1st May, 1999.

xxiv. A 3-day Workshop on "Communication Education and Information Technology" organized by the National Commission for Colleges of Education, Abuja, Nigeria in collaboration with UNESCO at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba from 24th – 26th August, 2000.

xxv. Workshop on training of Implementers of Family Life and Emerging Health Issues Curriculum, held at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State between 8th and 9th April, 2010.

xxvi. A 3-day Capacity Building Workshop for Lecturers organized by the Committee of Deans, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State from 28th – 30th , May, 2012.

xxvii. A 5-day Computer Appreciation Programme for Tertiary Institutions organized by Digital-Bridge at Warri, Delta State from 27th February – 2nd March, 2010.

xxviii. South South Youth Summit on Entrepreneurship Education Ambassador's Training Workshop organized by Braced Commission in Collaboration with Delta State Government of Nigeria at Benezia Hotel Asaba, Delta State on the 29th of April, 2012.

xxix. 42nd Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria held in Asaba Delta State from 18th – 22nd of September, 2012.

xxx. Maiden National Conference of the School of Vocational Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba held at Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State, from 14th – 17th May, 2013.

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xxxiv. A 10-Day Workshop on the Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Curriculum and Instruction Materials in the ECOWAS Region held at Yaba College of Technology from 3rd to 13th December, 2012.

xxxv. Jerusalem pilgrimage organized and sponsored by Delta State Government, Nigeria in 2013.

xxxvi. 11th Annual National Conference/Exhibition of the National Association of Vocational and Technical Educators (NAVTED) organized in Collaboration

with the Schools of Business, Technical and Vocational Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.

xxxvii. 4th Biennial National Conference of the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana with the Theme: Curbing Unemployment through Technical, Vocational Training held from 4th – 7th June, 2013.

xxxviii. Workshop Organized by Henmuel Trainers Ltd in conjunction with SIM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Singapore Institute of Management, on "Entrepreneurs: Developing Winning Managers" held from 20 – 25 October, 2014.

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xliv. 14th Annual National Conference of the Home Economics Research Association of Nigeria (HERAN) held at Princess Alexandra Unity Hall, University of Nigeria, Nsukka from 18th -21st of September, 2013.

xlv. 17th Annual International Conference of the Home Economics Research Association of Nigeria (HERAN) held at the UBA Hall of Fame, University of Nigeria, Nsukka from 21st – 24th September, 2016 with the theme: "Sustainable Development Goals and Promotion of Family Well-Being: Challenging the Challenges.

xlvi. 6th Annual National Conference of the Family and Consumer Sciences of Nigeria (FACSSON) held at the University of Benin, Benin-City from August 28th – 31st, 2017.

xlvii. International Conference of the Home Economics Council of Nigeria (HECON)/International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) African Region on the theme: "Developing Skills for Improved Social and Economic Conditions of Families and Global Communities: Home Economics Future Direction" held at the 1,000 seater Auditorium, University of Uyo Main Campus, Uyo from 24th – 28th October, 2017.

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CHAPTER ONE

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND SCIENCE LITERACY: A PATH TO INCLUSIVE PROGRESS

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Introduction

Achieving gender equity and proficiency in science is essential, as both are fundamental to a society that prioritizes inclusivity and innovation. This article posits that enhancing gender inclusivity alongside science literacy will cultivate a more effective and equitable scientific community. Gender inclusivity, as defined by Wright and Delgado (2023), means recognizing and honoring all genders, providing equal opportunities, and ensuring participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) educational experiences. Conversely, Science literacy empowers individuals to critically analyze information, make informed decisions, and participate confidently in discussions about science and technology (Ortiz-Revilla et al., 2021). The intersection of these two concepts is crucial for creating an environment where all individuals can participate in and benefit from scientific advancements. Challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes encourages acceptance, belonging, and fairness for individuals of all gender identities (Wright & Delgado, 2023; Jackson et al., 2021). Systemic barriers such as societal norms, educational inequalities, and biases in the workplace continue to limit the participation of women and other marginalized groups in STEM (Macdonald & Huser, 2020). This marginalization not only infringes on human rights but also deprives societies of the diverse perspectives and innovations needed to address global challenges. Promoting scientific literacy among all demographic groups fosters informed decision-making and resilience in the face of technological and environmental changes. Therefore, bridging the gender gap in STEM and enhancing scientific literacy are interconnected goals that are crucial for inclusive economic development and sustainable growth (Jackson et al., 2021).

Researchers worldwide have investigated the crucial dimensions and stereotypes in STEM fields and their impact on gender disparities, interest, and

academic success (Master et al., 2020; MacDonald & Huser, 2020). Nonetheless, as our understanding of gender evolves in educational settings, integrating gender elements into education presents a challenge (Babak et al., 2021). Despite progress made, significant gaps still exist (Adeimi et al., 2020). Specifically, girls from underprivileged communities encounter cultural pressures, financial constraints, and inadequate infrastructure, which impede their educational opportunities. Moreover, gender biases perpetuate inequalities in subject choices and career aspirations, particularly in STEM disciplines (Kuteesa et al., 2024).

The Significance of Gender Equity in Scientific Fields

Ensuring gender equity in science provides equal opportunity for both genders to engage in and benefit from research and innovation (Jackson et al., 2021). Exploring this relationship helps uncover strategies, advantages, and needed systemic changes for equal access. Historically, women have been underrepresented in STEM fields. This has led to a loss of talent and a narrowing of perspectives. Improved gender equity can promote ethical and responsible research. Diverse teams offer unique insights and consider various community effects (Folberg & Kaboli-Nejad, 2020). Advancing equity in science not only tackles disparities but also enhances inquiry through diverse viewpoints.

The Role of Scientific Literacy in Societal Advancement

Scientific literacy acts as a crucial basis for societal growth. It gives individuals an understanding of essential scientific principles that guide decision-making and drive innovation. However, when considering literacy in science education, it is important to specify the perspective being used. The concept of "scientific literacy" is not consistent. While it is acknowledged as a key goal of science education, its interpretation changes with social, cultural, and political contexts. This highlights the many ways science contributes to societal advancement (Valladares, 2021; Kelp et al., 2023). Scientific literacy is crucial for advancing both individual and collective progress. It provides people with critical thinking, logical reasoning, and the ability to assess and use evidence. These skills encourage resilience, creativity, and active civic management. Osborne (2023) discusses the importance of science, scientific literacy, and science education. The research indicates that a scientifically literate population makes more knowledgeable decisions in health, environmental sustainability, and public policy. Fostering better problem-solving and decision-making, scientific literacy helps societies adapt, act responsibly, and tackle complex global issues. For young learners, nurturing scientific literacy early strengthens their skills and supports ongoing social progress and economic growth. Environments that engage marginalized students in scientific activities promote broader inclusion and greater literacy (Conlon et al., 2023).

Furthermore, scientific literacy fosters civic engagement; individuals with higher literacy levels are more inclined to support science-based policies and

maintain informed views on technology and environmental issues (Nehoda et al., 2024). In a time filled with misinformation, media literacy anchored in scientific reasoning is vital for combating pseudoscience, conspiracy theories, and anti-science movements. Crucially, when scientific literacy is developed without gender bias, empowerment becomes equitable, enabling women to better advocate for their health, environmental sustainability, and rights. Ultimately, by promoting scientific literacy, we can cultivate a society better prepared to make informed choices and engage with science and technology.

Obstacles to Gender Equity in Scientific Understanding

Even though gender equality and scientific understanding are crucial, various obstacles hinder women and girls from fully engaging in STEM education and careers. These obstacles include stereotypes and biases, a lack of role models, cultural influences, and unequal access to educational resources. Women are significantly underrepresented in STEM disciplines and professions (Larkin & Lowrie, 2023). Those who enter STEM fields often encounter lower pay and limited career growth opportunities. In numerous cultures, girls are discouraged from pursuing STEM from a young age, particularly in male-dominated sectors, due to the belief that science, mathematics, and technology are areas suited for men. Overcoming the barriers women encounter in STEM requires a united effort from educators, policymakers, and the scientific community to create inclusive spaces that unlock everyone's potential in science.

The Role of Inclusive Education in Promoting Scientific Literacy and STEM Engagement

Inclusive education is vital for expanding access to science by dismantling stereotypes and nurturing learning environments where every student can thrive. Creating curricula and educational materials that reflect diverse viewpoints and contributions is crucial for igniting curiosity, challenging biases, and increasing participation in STEM fields (Jackson et al., 2021; MacDonld & Huser, 2020). By promoting inclusive educational practices, students from various backgrounds and identities are empowered and encouraged to pursue scientific knowledge and careers. Consequently, inclusive education acts as a crucial starting point for developing scientific literacy and establishing more diverse pipelines into STEM fields.

Gender Equality in Science as a Catalyst for Innovation and Societal Advancement

While inclusive education paves the way to science, achieving gender equality in STEM institutions is essential for ensuring that chances for participation extend beyond mere access to long-term engagement and career advancement. Historically, women have been underrepresented in scientific research and leadership, resulting in a loss of talent and diverse perspectives crucial for innovation (Jackson et al., 2021). Promoting gender equality not only addresses these disparities but also

enhances the quality of research by bringing in a broader range of experiences and viewpoints. Thus, equitable involvement in science is not only a question of equity but also a strategic imperative for fostering discovery, addressing complex challenges, and ensuring that scientific results cater to the needs of all demographics.

The Link between Gender Equality and Scientific Literacy

Advancing gender equality and enhancing scientific literacy are interdependent objectives that collectively promote significant societal advancement (Master & Meltzoff, 2020). Scientific literacy empowers individuals to critically evaluate information, make informed decisions, and engage actively in civic life. By promoting gender equality in STEM, we ensure that women and underrepresented groups have equal access to these opportunities, fostering broader participation and a more diverse and vibrant knowledge base. By confronting the obstacles faced by women in STEM, societies can uncover effective strategies to dismantle systemic barriers, secure equitable access to scientific education, and optimize the advantages of diverse contributions. The ultimate goal is to build a society that is more inclusive, innovative, and resilient, where scientific literacy and gender equality advance hand in hand.

Addressing the Issues: Achieving gender equity in STEM necessitates tackling systemic challenges surrounding educational retention, workplace inclusivity, fair acknowledgment of contributions, and equal pay. In addition to these structural obstacles, equity efforts must also confront intersectional disparities that especially impact women of color, who frequently experience compounded marginalization. Addressing these inequalities requires not only institutional reforms in hiring, mentoring, and promotion processes but also cultural shifts that challenge implicit biases and stereotypes embedded within STEM disciplines (Thacker et al., 2022). By cultivating genuine diversity and inclusion, the STEM community can create environments that encourage fairness, boost innovation, and ensure that scientific and technological advancements reflect the contributions and perspectives of all societal members.

Advancing inclusive education and gender equity in STEM: Inclusive education is a vital strategy for promoting both gender equity and scientific literacy. This strategy involves developing curricula and instructional resources (Ogunode et al., 2024) that emphasize diverse perspectives and showcase the contributions of historically marginalized groups, thus challenging stereotypes and biases that deter participation in STEM. These practices not only eliminate barriers but also inspire curiosity and sustain interest in science among students from various backgrounds and identities. Moreover, achieving gender equity in the sciences ensures that everyone, regardless of gender, has equal opportunities to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from scientific research and innovation. The ongoing underrepresentation of women in STEM has resulted in a significant loss of talent,

creativity, and insight, which diminishes the breadth and influence of scientific progress. Therefore, promoting gender equity not only addresses historical injustices but also enriches scientific exploration, as including diverse voices expands perspectives, improves problem-solving, and drives innovation.

Mentorship initiatives: Mentorship programs are another crucial tool for advancing gender equity and enhancing scientific literacy. By providing ongoing guidance, role models, and professional support from seasoned practitioners, these programs are vital in building confidence, developing skills, and fostering a sense of belonging (Cohen, 2021) in STEM settings. For individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, mentorship can be especially transformative, as it addresses the isolation, bias, and structural barriers that often obstruct their involvement and persistence in scientific careers. Additionally, in alignment with Mcilongo and Strydom's (2021) work, mentorship not only aids individual growth but also drives broader institutional change by nurturing inclusive academic and professional environments. When integrated into educational systems and research institutions, mentorship initiatives can create networking opportunities, promote leadership paths, and help diversify the scientific workforce, ultimately enriching innovation and ensuring that scientific advancements benefit everyone equitably (Merga & Mason, 2021).

Revamping science education through inclusive approaches: Inclusive practices in science education are vital for fostering gender equality (Wright & Delgado, 2023) and enhancing science literacy. Effective teaching strategies that highlight the contributions of female scientists and engage learners are crucial for shifting perceptions regarding who can thrive in science. The importance of relatable role models cannot be overstated, as they encourage identification and motivation, especially among girls, enabling them to feel more connected and fostering a sense of belonging, which can dismantle stereotypes and challenge conventional ideas about who can succeed in a specific field. Furthermore, curricula should focus on collaborative, inquiry-based learning to enhance self-efficacy and address confidence gaps that often contribute to attrition.

Targeted Intervention in Calculus I: Targeted interventions in Calculus I involve customized approaches designed to support students from underrepresented groups, particularly women, in calculus courses. By addressing the specific challenges these students encounter, these interventions seek to enhance their academic achievement, confidence, and persistence in STEM disciplines. To tackle this issue, educators have employed various targeted strategies, including pairing female students with female peer mentors who have excelled in Calculus I to provide support, direction, and encouragement (Merga & Mason, 2021). Offering supplemental instruction or review sessions tailored specifically for female students can help close knowledge gaps and bolster confidence. Organizing workshops that focus on fostering a growth mindset can assist female students in developing a more positive and resilient attitude towards learning mathematical concepts, while

inviting women professionals in STEM fields to share their experiences and serve as role models can help female students recognize the relevance and importance of Calculus 1 (MacDonald & Huser, 2020). Targeted initiatives can help female students feel more connected to their peers and the STEM community, alleviating feelings of isolation and enhancing their sense of belonging. By implementing targeted interventions in Calculus I, educators can work towards creating a more supportive and inclusive learning atmosphere that fosters the success and retention of women in STEM fields.

Policy and Institutional Strategies for Inclusion

Advancing gender equity in STEM depends on robust policy and institutional strategies. Governments, universities, and professional organizations must drive this change by enacting targeted initiatives such as scholarships, grants, and fellowships that advance women's involvement and leadership in scientific research and higher education (Fakhar et al., 224). Complementary workplace reforms, including parental leave, flexible work, and anti-discrimination policies, are also essential to create environments where women thrive in STEM (Mdlenleni et al., 2021; Leal Filho et al., 2023). For real progress, institutions must build accountability through gender equity audits, diversity metrics, and transparent reporting. Broad-based collaboration across academia, industry, and civil society can further break barriers for underrepresented groups through mentorship and outreach. Promoting gender equity in STEM is not only a moral and social imperative, but also a strategic investment in innovation and societal resilience. Fostering equitable talent pipelines is crucial for securing scientific excellence, expanding problem-solving capabilities, and ensuring that the benefits of scientific advancements are accessible to everyone.

Conclusion

Gender equality and scientific literacy are interconnected foundations of inclusive advancement, and their progress must now be seen as urgent requirements rather than mere aspirations. Providing equal access to STEM creates opportunities and promotes justice while also enhancing economies, fostering innovation, and ensuring that scientific endeavors meet the needs of all communities. Furthermore, improving scientific literacy equips individuals to engage with information critically, influence policy, and actively participate in civic matters. Nonetheless, the ongoing underrepresentation of women in STEM, systemic challenges such as bias and unequal recognition, and educational practices that fail to accommodate diverse learners continue to hinder progress. Overcoming these barriers requires immediate, collaborative action through inclusive educational initiatives that foster confidence and representation, institutional reforms that promote equitable access to resources and career advancement, and cultural shifts that challenge stereotypes through accountability programs such as Athena SWAN

and AU-UNESCO, which ensure accountability for promoting diversity and inclusion. Ultimately, advancing gender equity in tandem with scientific literacy is not only an ethical obligation but also a strategic imperative. Societies that postpone these actions risk deepening inequality and stifling innovation, while those that take decisive steps will cultivate resilience, inclusivity, and sustainable development for future generations.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen policies that enforce gender-inclusivity in the recruitment, retention, and progression within STEM careers.
2. Update science education curricula to highlight diverse contributions and address gender biases.
3. Dedicate resources for community outreach to boost STEM awareness among underrepresented groups.
4. Support mentorship programs that link female scientists with younger learners.
5. Foster collaborations across sectors to ensure equitable access to technology and research opportunities.
6. Create assessment systems to monitor advancements toward gender equity goals in STEM fields.

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CHAPTER TWO

GENDER EQUITY AND CHEMISTRY LABORATORY MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

Gender equity in Nigerian tertiary institutions' chemistry laboratories is hampered by widespread gender gaps in STEM enrollment, deeply rooted cultural norms, and systemic workplace challenges. While recent studies show a growing awareness and some initiatives to promote gender inclusivity, significant disparities remain in participation and leadership roles. Achieving gender equity in science laboratories is a moral obligation and a necessity for scientific progress. The term gender encompasses the social, economic, and cultural aspects of being male or female. In most cultures, being male or female goes beyond just physical and biological differences, influencing various aspects of life. Society has different expectations for men and women in terms of dress, behavior, and work. The way men and women interact with each other is influenced by these expectations, whether at home, at work, or in public. These interactions are shaped by common understandings of the abilities and characteristics associated with each gender. The concept of gender is distinct from biological sex because it is shaped by social and cultural factors.

The roles men and women play and the expectations of them differ greatly across cultures and shift over time. Because society shapes these gender attributes, they can be changed to make a society fairer. Gender equity refers to fair treatment for all genders based on their unique needs. It is the process of allocating resources, programs and decision-making fairly to both males and females. This requires ensuring that everyone has access to a full range of opportunities to achieve the social, psychological and physical benefits that come from participating and leading in sport and physical activity. It does not necessarily mean making the same programs and facilities available to both males and females. Gender equity requires that girls and women be provided with a full range of activity and program choices that meet their needs, interests and experiences. Therefore, some

activities may be the same as those offered to boys and men, some may be altered, and some may be altogether different.

The terms gender equality and gender equity are often related but distinct. While they sound alike, their meanings and practical applications differ. Gender equality and equity are not interchangeable terms; they have different implications in real-world contexts.

Although women and marginalized genders are increasingly represented in science, significant gaps persist. Fields like Chemistry, including other related science subjects, still have few women and marginalized individuals most especially in chemistry laboratory management. These disparities show up in participation rates and also in opportunities for career advancement and recognition. The scientific community's spaces and laboratories often lack inclusivity. Opportunities for growth and acknowledgment are unevenly distributed, perpetuating the existing disparities. Science laboratories are key to education and professional growth, and how they are managed affects men and women differently. Gender equality in science related fields remains a major issue worldwide, with ongoing disparities that prevent countries and institutions from reaching their full potential.

Women in Nigeria face significant challenges in tertiary education, particularly in chemistry and other lab-based fields. Effective lab management is crucial as it affects students' access, participation, safety, and future careers. However, societal norms and institutional practices often put women at a disadvantage in these environments. This marginalization is exacerbated by how resources are allocated, hindering the progress of individual women and the broader community. As a result, women's advancement is constrained, affecting their overall educational and professional growth. The study investigates gender equity in managing chemistry laboratories at Nigerian tertiary institutions. It draws on existing research on gender disparities in Nigerian higher educational system and international best practices. The goal is to identify factors that hinder equity, the consequences, and ways to create fair and effective laboratory environments.

Gender Inequalities in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions: Background and Patterns

Women are underrepresented in Nigeria's STEM fields, a problem that persists despite efforts to promote gender inclusion. Nwajiuba and Ukwandu, (2021) found that socio-cultural stereotypes, high costs, and male dominance in technology drive low female participation in information and communication technology in South-Eastern Nigeria's tertiary institutions. These factors are also relevant to laboratory-based sciences like chemistry, where similar issues of exclusion, limited resources, and gendered perceptions exist. Like any other sector, the ability of the Nigerian tertiary institutions to achieve their goals and objectives is a function of its ability to attract competent workforce irrespective of whether they are males or females. Some women were even refused employment

despite the fact that they were qualified because it was felt that the women would be a distractive influence in the laboratory working in an "all-male" career (Adegun, 2012). Research from Nigerian universities shows that few female students are in lab-heavy courses, especially in higher years. The reasons for this are similar to those in other related fields of study: people think chemistry is for men, there are not many female chemists to look up to, and women have limited access to resources and support from their institutions. Women also face societal expectations around their family and work roles, which can limit their time for lab work. This issue is not unique to Nigeria, as studies from other countries have found similar problems.

Women representation Chemistry Laboratory Management in Nigerian Tertiary Institution

In Nigerian tertiary institutions, women are underrepresented in chemistry laboratory management, reflecting broader gender disparities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) leadership. Although progress is being made, significant barriers rooted in socio-cultural norms, stereotypes, and institutional practices continue to limit female representation in these senior roles.

Current status

The current status of women representation in chemistry laboratory management in Nigerian tertiary institution faces several challenges. Societal and cultural barriers hinder women's advancement in academia and laboratory management. Research consistently shows that women occupy a disproportionately low number of STEM leadership positions in Nigeria, including roles in university laboratory management.The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics estimated in 2023 that only 22% of graduates in STEM subjects were women. This low pipeline of female STEM graduates affects the pool of candidates for technical and managerial roles in science.

A 2013 study found that female science enrollment in tertiary institutions was consistently lower than male enrollment across all geo-political zones in Nigeria, though the gap was wider in the northern zones. Despite the challenges, there are numerous examples of women who have achieved high-ranking positions in chemistry and science, proving that excellence is not gender-specific. Organizations like the Chemical Society of Nigeria (CSN) and Women in Chemistry (WIC) chapters celebrate these accomplishments and provide networking opportunities.

Factors that hinder Gender Equity in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions' laboratory Management

Based on extensive research of academic literature and studies, the following are key factors that hinder gender equity in laboratory management within Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Cultural beliefs and gender roles

Socio-cultural stereotypes that link masculinity to scientific competence are a major obstacle to achieving gender equity in laboratory management. Many female students see laboratory-based sciences as male-dominated fields, according to Nwajiuba and Ukwandu (2021). This view is supported by the fact that men outnumber women among students and faculty in laboratory settings. More also, research has shown that gender stereotyping can affect a woman manager's career aspirations. Women are often stereotyped as lacking ambition or leadership skills, which further limits their opportunities to advance into laboratory management roles. Societal expectations place the primary responsibility of family care on women. Although some studies show women adapting by hiring domestic help, this dual-role burden can limit their ability to commit to demanding, long-hour managerial positions.

Institutional and administrative barriers

Bias in staff recruitment, appointment, and promotion is a significant issue. Some studies have found that gender discrimination, rather than merit, influences who is selected for positions of authority in universities. Many policies aimed at gender equity are poorly implemented, if at all. The failure to enforce existing gender acts means that women do not receive the adequate benefits or representation envisioned by these regulations. In addition, Sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination by male colleagues and superiors create a hostile work environment for women in academia, undermining their confidence and performance.A lack of supportive, gender-friendly policies and facilities, such as poor provision of childcare for nursing mothers, hinders the career progression of female staff. Universities often do not have institutional arrangements to support a work-life balance for all employees.Women continue to be underrepresented in key leadership and decision-making roles within universities. Though women may constitute a significant portion of the general workforce, they remain a minority in senior academic positions.

Resource and skill-related issues

Female academics, like other women in the workforce, may face financial challenges and lack access to research grants and funding. This can limit their ability to conduct research, advance their careers, and attain higher position. Some studies have noted that a lack of confidence in their own abilities can be a challenge for women in leadership positions. This can lead to women being less assertive in pursuing managerial roles.Women in educational management and science fields often face a lack of opportunities for succession planning, leadership development, and mentorship. This can leave them unprepared for managerial roles and hinder their upward mobility.

Pervasive historical and economic factors

Historically, women in Nigeria faced determined efforts to deprive them of employment opportunities. While the context has changed, these systemic biases have had a lasting impact on gender representation in professional fields, including academia. In low-income families, resources for education may be allocated primarily to male children, who are perceived as future breadwinners. This economic disparity at the foundational level contributes to the lower educational attainment and participation of women in some science and technology fields.

Gender Equity Challenges in meeting Millennium Goals Development

The Millennium Development Goals had a target to achieve gender equality in education by 2015 under Goal 3. Although there was no specific goal for managing science laboratories, Goal 7 addressed environmental sustainability and integrating sustainable development into policies. This goal indirectly related to laboratory management in terms of adopting sustainable practices. A 30:70 gender affirmative action policy is a temporary measure to address historical discrimination by reserving 30% of positions for women. The goal of this policy is to achieve gender equality and create a more inclusive society. Other targets, such as 35% or 50:50, are also used to promote equal opportunities for women. The main objective is to ensure women have equal opportunities in employment and education.

Laboratory Practices and Specific Curriculum Reforms

In laboratory settings, changes have been made to both the structure and teaching methods. Research shows that creating a fair and inclusive lab environment - by dividing tasks fairly, giving everyone equal access to equipment, and changing the curriculum - can lead to better results for women and other underrepresented groups. For instance, using lab curricula based on skills and inquiry-based learning has been linked to smaller gender gaps in test scores and higher confidence among female students. Research shows that changing the curriculum alone is not enough to create a more inclusive environment. To be effective, interventions must also tackle the underlying issues in science and lab culture. This includes addressing stereotypes, how students interact with each other, and how instructors interact with students, as highlighted by Doucette and Singh in 2024. Making marginalized genders more visible in science can also help. This can be achieved by featuring women and nonbinary scientists in lectures and workshops, setting up mentorship programs, and providing facilities that are accessible to everyone, as suggested by Goswami *et al.,* (2021) and Stuss *et al.,* (2020). These efforts can contribute to a more inclusive lab environment.

Consequences of Gender Inequity in Laboratory Management

Women's limited involvement in managing chemistry labs has significant effects. It hinders their career growth and erodes their confidence. It also limits their ability to develop important scientific skills (Nwajiuba and Ukwandu, 2021). At a larger scale, unequal gender representation reduces diverse perspectives, hampers innovation, and leads to systemic problems. Goswami *et al.,* (2021) observed that few women hold leadership positions or receive awards, showing that the scientific community is not using all available talent. This underrepresentation is a missed opportunity, as it fails to tap into the full range of skills and ideas available. Persistent inequality can lead to poor laboratory practices because leaders may not understand the needs of female students. These leaders often come from similar backgrounds, so they may overlook issues related to safety, accessibility, and mentorship. The lack of female leaders in laboratories also makes it less likely that young women will pursue careers in science, as they have few role models to look up to. This creates a cycle where women are excluded from scientific fields, and it continues because there are not enough women in leadership positions to change it.

Institutional Practices and Leadership Representation

Gender disparities persist in Nigerian tertiary institutions due to institutional policies and practices that often fail to address them. The lack of mentorship programs, gender-sensitive scheduling, and support for female students exacerbates the issue. Goswami *et al.,* (2021) on Indian physics, found that women's representation declines at higher academic levels due to limited access to leadership roles and recognition. Similarly, in Nigerian chemistry labs, few women hold key positions such as lab coordinators or safety managers. This scarcity reinforces the notion of male dominance, limiting opportunities for women to advance. As a result, the existing imbalance is perpetuated, hindering female empowerment in these institutions.

Safety, Harassment, and Hostile Environments

Laboratory settings can be prone to gender-based harassment and bias. International research carried out by Strauss *et al.,* (2020) and Rasmussen *et al.,* (2019) shows that a hostile work environment negatively affects women's involvement in STEM fields. Women may be discouraged from fully participating in lab activities or seeking leadership positions due to fear of harassment, inadequate reporting systems, and the acceptance of behaviors that exclude them.

Strategies for Advancing Gender Equity in Chemistry Laboratory Management

Creativity, a Pedagogical Tool for addressing Gender gap Issues

Creativity may stand as a strategic tool in promoting female participation in science related fields with chemistry laboratory skills in particular. [Kenedy et al., 2021; Kijima et al., 2021; Wingard et al., 2022]. Creativity has been shown to

reduce negative emotions and is associated with increased self-esteem (Karwowski et al., 2018) and a greater likelihood of students continuing their studies in chemistry laboratory management skills (Viera et al., 2024). Creativity is increasingly recognized as a capability that can be taught, learned and applied across various situations and fields (Paston et al., 2022). It has recently been measured globally by OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2024). Collaborative design thinking is highlighted as a pedagogical approach that fosters creativity and confidence through interactive, student-driven problem, making it well suited to addressing gender equity in effective laboratory management skills [Kijima et al., 2021; Wingard et al., 2022]. However, acknowledging that gender differences in perceptions of creativity exists, more research is needed to explore how these differences manifest among male and female students within tertiary institutions. Recent research has attempted to investigate these differences in more detail, although the findings are still unclear (Nakano et al., 2021; Runco et al., 2010). While some recent studies have found no statistically significant differences between males and females (Hashim et al., 2022; Taylor & Barbot, 2021; Taylor et al., 2023; Zieliǹska et al., 2022), others have found gender differences (Abdulla Alabbasi et al., 2022; Hora et al., 2022; Shubina & Kulakli, 2019; Taylor, 2023b; Taylor et al., 2023). One explanation for the lack of agreement, according to Nakano et al. (2021), may be because these research examine many facets of creativity, ranging from creative performance to creative potential.

Institutional Policy Reform and Data-Driven Interventions

To address gender inequity in laboratory management, Nigerian tertiary institutions must take deliberate action. They should implement evidence-based interventions based on recommendations from Goswami et al. (2021). These interventions include conducting gender audits of laboratory spaces and transparently reporting gender representation in management roles. Institutions should also allocate resources equitably. Regularly collecting and analyzing data broken down by gender can help identify areas for improvement and track progress over time. This information can inform targeted strategies to achieve greater gender equality in laboratory management.

Mentorship and Capacity Building

Connecting female students with experienced women in lab management through mentorship programs helps break down barriers. Nwajiuba and Ukwandu, (2021) suggested that structured mentoring and training can build leadership skills and professional connections for women in Information Communication Technology, and the same approach can work for female scientists. This type of training can also provide role models for women who want to succeed in scienctific skills. Including gender equity topics in lab safety and management training raises awareness among students and staff.

Resource Accessibility and Support Mechanisms

Institutions can make lab participation more accessible by removing financial and logistical hurdles. They can subsidize lab fees for female students and offer grants for safety gear. Equal access to lab time and facilities is also crucial. Flexible scheduling and childcare support can help women balance lab work with family duties. These recommendations are supported by research in both Nigerian and international settings.

Inclusive Leadership and Representation

Having more women in laboratory management is important for both practical and symbolic reasons. Qualified women should be recruited, supported, and promoted to key roles like laboratory coordinators and safety officers. This can help break down stereotypes and make the work environment more inclusive. Research shows that inclusive leadership brings diverse viewpoints, improves decision-making, and sets a positive tone for the institution. When women hold leadership positions, it fosters a more collaborative and effective work environment.

Addressing Harassment and Creating Safe Spaces

Institutions need to set clear rules against harassment in laboratories and make it easy to report incidents. They should also promote a culture of respect and accountability. Open talks about the challenges women face, like those in Indian physics, can help raise awareness and encourage people to take responsibility for creating a fair and safe environment. These discussions, such as those held in conferences and through charters, can also make it more acceptable to report incidents. By doing so, institutions can work together to achieve equity and safety.

Enhancing Gender Equity Initiatives and Interventions in Laboratory Management in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions

"On a worldwide scale, science... is still a man's business. This situation is no longer acceptable. It is economically unacceptable because of the waste of human resources that it entails; it is humanly unacceptable since it prevents half the population from taking part in building the world; it is intellectually unacceptable as it deprives scientific and technological research of ideas and methods, in a word, of creativity. Furthermore, it mortgages the future since it nullifies any prospect of a general mobilization in support of science in the service of a lasting peace and sustainable development". Federico Mayor (1999)the Director General of UNESCO

Improving gender equity in laboratory management in Nigerian tertiary institutions requires a multi-pronged approach to address deep-seated cultural biases, institutional policies, and creating supportive environments that supports

advancement in women. These strategies can be grouped into institutional, cultural and individual actions.

Implement binding gender equity policies

Tertiary institutions should develop and enforce clear gender policies that guide appointments, promotions, and opportunities for all academic and non-academic staff. A successful example includes Obafemi Awolowo University's (OAU) gender equity project, which has promoted gender sensitivity across the institution.

Introduce gender-sensitive recruitment and promotion

Institutions should establish systems that ensure gender balance in search and promotion committees, especially for management positions. This helps address the existing gender imbalance in faculty and leadership roles within Nigerian academia.

Mandate gender-disaggregated data

Departments and faculties within a Nigerian institution are required to collect and analyze gender-specific data on student enrollment, staff hiring, and appointments to management positions. This provides a baseline for tracking progress and identifying specific areas that need improvement.

Establish a work-life balance framework

Creating a family-friendly policies, such as subsidized childcare and parental leave for both mothers and fathers should be of advantage. These policies help women manage their family responsibilities and compete for leadership positions on an equal footing.

Implementation of targeted mentorship programmes

Creating and promoting a formal mentorship programs that pair female laboratory staff and students with senior female scientists in leadership roles. This inspires the next generation of female leaders and provides practical guidance on navigating career paths in chemistry and its related fields.

Offering of gender sensitivity and bias training

Conduct mandatory workshops for all staff, particularly those in hiring and management roles, to address unconscious bias and raise awareness of gender issues. This can help challenge stereotypical beliefs that position science as a male-dominated field.

Promoting visibility and representation

Celebrate the accomplishments of successful female scientists and lab managers by featuring them in university publications, on websites, and at events. Using female role models in educational materials can also inspire female students.

Conducting awareness campaigns

Targeted campaigns within tertiary institutions and the broader community should be organized to challenge cultural norms and gender roles that often limit women's career choices. These campaigns can engage religious and community leaders to help shift attitudes. Gender gap at its root should be addressed early.More also,by engaging with secondary schools, host career talks, workshops, and STEM-focused events featuring successful women to encourage girls to pursue science and technology courses.

Best practices in laboratory management may be enhanced by communicating openly about opportunities for training, promotion, and resource allocation within the lab. Clear processes prevent hidden biases and ensure all staff can understand how to advance their careers. Equal access to opportunities may be provided by actively addressing imbalances in task allocation by ensuring that both male and female staff are given a full range of developmental experiences. This includes assigning challenging projects, not just easy or routine tasks.

Conclusion

Achieving gender equity in chemistry laboratory management is crucial for Nigeria's development, both morally and practically. Women remain underrepresented in Nigerian tertiary institutions due to societal stereotypes, financial constraints, institutional resistance, and unwelcoming environments. These obstacles can be overcome. Effective solutions can be drawn from Nigerian and international experiences, including policy changes, mentorship programs, resource allocation, inclusive leadership, and strong safety and accountability measures. To advance gender equity, sustained commitment, collaboration across disciplines, and active participation from all stakeholders are necessary. By creating fair laboratory environments, Nigerian tertiary institutions can tap into their scientific workforce's potential, drive innovation, and build a more just and prosperous society.

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CHAPTER THREE

PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY IN NIGERIA THROUGH LITERACY EDUCATION

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Introduction

Gender equity and gender equality are often used interchangeably, yet they represent distinct concepts with critical implications for social justice and development. Gender equality refers to the state in which individuals of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. In contrast, gender equity recognizes that different genders have different needs and experiences, and therefore, may require different approaches and resources to achieve fairness and justice (Reynolds & Wellons, 2021; Nanni, 2023). While equality emphasizes sameness, equity focuses on fairness, acknowledging systemic barriers and working to dismantle them to ensure everyone can thrive. This distinction is particularly important in contexts like Nigeria, where historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors have entrenched gender disparities.

Literacy education plays a transformative role in societal development. It is not merely the ability to read and write, but a foundational skill that empowers individuals to access information, participate in civic life, and improve their socio-economic conditions (Pekkolay, 2022; Minor, 2023). In the 21st century, literacy extends beyond traditional reading and writing to include digital and critical literacies, which are essential for navigating modern economies and democratic societies (Walter, 2024; Kong, Cheung & Zhang, 2023). For women and girls, literacy is a gateway to empowerment, enabling them to challenge oppressive norms, make informed decisions, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Despite progress in educational access, Nigeria continues to grapple with significant gender disparities. According to Adeosun and Owolabi (2021), factors such as poverty, early marriage, cultural norms, and insecurity disproportionately hinder girls' access to education, particularly in northern regions. These disparities are reflected in literacy rates: while male literacy stands at approximately 71.3%, female literacy lags behind at 52.7%, with even wider gaps in rural areas (Mahlangu, 2021). Such inequalities

Historical and Socio-Cultural Context of Gender Equity in Nigeria

Traditional gender roles in Nigerian society have long been shaped by patriarchal norms, with men typically occupying positions of authority and women relegated to domestic and caregiving roles. In many ethnic groups, such as the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, men are traditionally seen as breadwinners and heads of households, while women are expected to manage the home, raise children, and support their husbands' ambitions. These roles are reinforced through rites of passage, proverbs, and social expectations that define masculinity and femininity in rigid terms. Although women have historically contributed significantly to agriculture, trade, and informal economies, their labor has often been undervalued and excluded from formal recognition.

Access to education in Nigeria has historically mirrored these gendered expectations. During the colonial era, Western education was introduced primarily to train male clerks, interpreters, and administrators to support the colonial bureaucracy. Girls' education was largely neglected or limited to domestic science and religious instruction, reinforcing their roles as homemakers. Even after independence, educational policies and investments often favored urban centers and male students, leaving rural girls at a disadvantage. According to Adeosun and Owolabi (2021), this legacy has contributed to persistent gender gaps in literacy and school enrollment, particularly in northern Nigeria where cultural and religious norms further restrict girls' access to formal education.

Religion and culture continue to exert a profound influence on gender dynamics in Nigeria. In predominantly Muslim northern states, interpretations of Islamic teachings often emphasize female modesty and domesticity, leading to early marriages and limited educational opportunities for girls. In contrast, southern regions with a stronger Christian influence may offer more educational access to girls, yet still grapple with patriarchal attitudes that prioritize male advancement. Cultural practices such as bride price, polygamy, and male inheritance rights further entrench gender inequality across the country.

Colonialism also played a pivotal role in institutionalizing gender disparities. Pre-colonial Nigerian societies, while not devoid of gender roles, often featured complementary systems where women held significant economic and political power—such as the market queens among the Yoruba or the female chiefs among the Igbo. However, British colonial rule disrupted these systems by centralizing authority in male-dominated structures and sidelining women from formal governance and economic participation. This shift not only marginalized women but also redefined gender roles in ways that persist today.

Understanding this historical and socio-cultural backdrop is essential for crafting effective literacy interventions. Promoting gender equity in Nigeria through education requires not only addressing present-day barriers but also

challenging the deep-rooted norms and legacies that continue to shape gendered experiences.

Current State of Gender Equity in Nigeria

Gender equity in Nigeria remains a pressing developmental challenge, particularly in the realm of literacy and education. Despite national and international commitments to gender equality, significant disparities persist across regions, age groups, and socio-economic classes. Literacy statistics reveal a persistent gender gap. As of 2024, the youth literacy gender parity index (GPI) in Nigeria stands at 1.0, indicating near parity among young people aged 15–24 who can read and write with understanding. However, this masks deeper inequalities among adults and across regions. According to Gitnux's 2025 education report, Nigeria's gross secondary school enrollment ratio is approximately 57.7%, with girls disproportionately underrepresented in northern statesgitnux.org. Furthermore, over 10.5 million children remain out of school, and a large proportion of them are girls.

Regional disparities are stark, particularly between the North and South. In Northern Nigeria, less than half of all girls attend school, with many facing barriers such as early marriage, insecurity, and socio-cultural resistance to female education. The Almajiri system, which prioritizes Islamic religious instruction over formal education, further limits access for boys and girls alike in the North. In contrast, Southern Nigeria—especially urban centers like Lagos and Enugu—has higher female literacy and school attendance rates, driven by better infrastructure, more progressive gender norms, and stronger economic conditions. The Nigerian government has taken steps to address these disparities through policy and international alignment. The National Policy on Gender in Basic Education emphasizes equal access to quality education for boys and girls, and outlines strategies such as gender-sensitive teacher training, community mobilization, and curriculum reform. Additionally, Nigeria is a signatory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). These goals commit the country to ensuring inclusive, equitable education and eliminating gender disparities at all levels by 2030United Nations in Nigeria. Despite these efforts, implementation remains uneven. Challenges such as inadequate funding, weak monitoring systems, and socio-political instability continue to hinder progress. Bridging the gender gap in literacy will require not only policy reform but also sustained investment, community engagement, and targeted interventions that address the unique needs of girls across Nigeria's diverse regions.

Barriers to Gender Equity in Literacy Education in Nigeria

Gender equity in literacy education in Nigeria faces persistent and multifaceted barriers, many of which are deeply rooted in socio-economic, cultural,

and institutional structures. These challenges disproportionately affect girls and women, limiting their access to quality education and perpetuating cycles of inequality.

Economic constraints and poverty

Economic constraints and poverty remain among the most significant obstacles. In low-income households, limited resources often prioritize boys' education over girls', who are expected to contribute to domestic labor or income-generating activities. According to Adeosun and Owolabi (2021), poverty exacerbates gender disparities by reducing school attendance and increasing dropout rates among girls, especially in rural areas. The cost of school fees, uniforms, and transportation can be prohibitive, and families may view girls' education as a poor investment due to traditional expectations of marriage and domesticity.

Early marriage and childbearing

Early marriage and childbearing further compound educational exclusion. In Northern Nigeria, where child marriage is more prevalent, girls are often withdrawn from school once betrothed or married. The National Policy on Gender Education (2022) identifies early marriage as a critical barrier to girls' literacy, noting that it truncates educational trajectories and exposes girls to health risks and social isolation. Once married, girls face increased domestic responsibilities and limited autonomy, making it difficult to continue formal education (Adeosun & Owolabi, 2021).

Gender-based violence and insecurity

Gender-based violence and insecurity also deter girls from attending school. Physical and sexual harassment within and around school environments create unsafe spaces that discourage female participation. The Gender in Nigeria 2025 report highlights how insecurity—especially in conflict-prone regions—has led to school closures and displacement, disproportionately affecting girls (Tella, 2025). The abduction of schoolgirls, such as in the Chibok and Dapchi incidents, has instilled fear and reinforced societal resistance to girls' education.

Cultural and religious resistance

Cultural and religious resistance plays a significant role in shaping attitudes toward female literacy. In some communities, religious interpretations discourage co-education or female mobility, while cultural norms reinforce the belief that a woman's place is in the home. These views are particularly entrenched in Northern Nigeria, where the Almajiri system and gender-segregated schooling limit girls' access to comprehensive education (Adeosun & Owolabi, 2021). Resistance is not limited to religion; patriarchal traditions across ethnic groups often prioritize male inheritance and leadership, reinforcing educational disparities.

Infrastructure and teacher bias

Infrastructure and teacher bias further hinder gender equity. Many schools lack gender-sensitive facilities such as separate toilets, which can discourage adolescent girls from attending during menstruation. In addition, teacher attitudes and classroom practices may reflect societal biases, with lower expectations for girls' academic performance or participation. The National Policy on Gender Education (2022) emphasizes the need for gender-responsive pedagogy and training to counteract these biases and foster inclusive learning environments.

The Role of Literacy in Empowering Women and Girls in Nigeria

Literacy is a powerful catalyst for transforming the lives of women and girls, particularly in societies where gender disparities are deeply entrenched. In Nigeria, where cultural, economic, and institutional barriers often limit female advancement, literacy serves as a foundational tool for empowerment. It enables women and girls to access opportunities, make informed decisions, and challenge the structures that perpetuate inequality.

1. One of the most immediate impacts of literacy is the enhancement of economic opportunities. Literate women are more likely to participate in the formal labor market, engage in entrepreneurship, and access financial services. According to Minor (2023), literacy equips individuals with the skills necessary for employment, such as communication, numeracy, and digital competence. In Nigeria, where a significant portion of the female population is engaged in informal trade and agriculture, literacy can improve business practices, facilitate access to credit, and increase productivity. Moreover, literate women are better positioned to understand market dynamics, negotiate fair prices, and diversify their income sources, thereby contributing to household and national economic growth.
2. Literacy also plays a critical role in improving health outcomes and family planning. Educated women are more likely to seek prenatal care, immunize their children, and adopt healthy practices. They are also better informed about reproductive health and family planning options, which contributes to lower fertility rates and improved maternal and child health. Pekkolay (2022) emphasizes that literacy enhances women's ability to comprehend health information, communicate with healthcare providers, and make autonomous decisions about their bodies. In Nigeria, where maternal mortality remains high and access to healthcare is uneven, literacy can bridge the gap between knowledge and action, ultimately saving lives.
3. Political participation and leadership among women are also closely linked to literacy. Literate women are more likely to engage in civic activities, vote in elections, and advocate for their rights. They are also better equipped to assume leadership roles in their communities and beyond. As Clavero and Galligan (2021) argue, gender equality in public life requires not only legal

reforms but also the empowerment of women through education. In Nigeria, where female representation in politics remains low, increasing literacy among women can foster a new generation of leaders who challenge exclusionary norms and advocate for inclusive governance.

4. Perhaps most importantly, literacy empowers women and girls to challenge patriarchal norms and redefine their roles in society. Education fosters critical thinking, self-awareness, and confidence—qualities that are essential for resisting discrimination and asserting one's rights. Reynolds and Wellons (2021) note that gender equity requires more than equal access; it demands a transformation of the structures that sustain inequality. Literacy provides women with the tools to question harmful traditions, demand accountability, and participate in shaping the narratives that define their communities. In Nigeria, where cultural practices such as early marriage, gender-based violence, and male-dominated inheritance laws persist, literacy can be a revolutionary force for change.

Case Studies and Success Stories in Promoting Gender Equity Through Literacy in Nigeria

Community-based literacy programs have emerged as vital tools for promoting gender equity in Nigeria, particularly in underserved and rural areas. One notable example is the Community-Based Management System (CBMS) implemented by the Nigerian Non-Governmental Association for Literacy Support Services (NOGALSS). This initiative empowers local communities to actively participate in planning and managing literacy programs tailored to their specific needs. By involving community members in decision-making, NOGALSS ensures that interventions are culturally relevant and sustainable, fostering ownership and inclusivity (NOGALSS, 2024). In Plateau State, a study on community-based literacy programs found significant improvements in English language proficiency among adult learners, especially women, highlighting the effectiveness of localized approaches (IIARD Journals, 2024) iiardjournals.org.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a pivotal role in advancing girl child education across Nigeria. Organizations such as the Zaccheus Onumba Dibiaezue Memorial Libraries (ZODML) have launched initiatives to combat illiteracy by providing free access to books, learning materials, and mentorship programs. These efforts are particularly impactful in regions where formal education is inaccessible or undervalued. ZODML's community initiatives have helped reduce dropout rates and encouraged girls to pursue education beyond primary school (ZODML, 2024). Similarly, international NGOs like UNICEF and Plan International have supported gender-responsive education policies, built safe learning environments, and provided scholarships for girls at risk of early marriage or economic exclusion.

The rise of mobile and digital literacy platforms has further expanded access to education for women and girls. With increasing smartphone penetration and internet access, digital tools are bridging the gap between formal education and remote learners. Mobile apps offering literacy training, e-books, and interactive lessons allow girls to learn at their own pace, even in areas affected by insecurity or cultural restrictions. These platforms also promote digital literacy, which is essential for navigating modern economies and participating in civic life. As Kong, Cheung, and Zhang (2023) note, digital literacy programs not only enhance conceptual understanding but also empower learners with ethical awareness and critical thinking skills—key components of gender equity in the digital age.

Strategies for Promoting Gender-Responsive Literacy Education in Nigeria

1. **Promoting gender-responsive literacy education in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach** that addresses both systemic barriers and cultural dynamics. To ensure equitable access and outcomes for girls and women, educational strategies must be inclusive, context-sensitive, and community-driven.
2. **Inclusive curriculum design is a foundational strategy.** A gender-responsive curriculum goes beyond neutral content to actively challenge stereotypes and promote positive representations of women and girls. It integrates themes of gender equity, human rights, and empowerment, encouraging learners to critically examine societal norms. According to the National Policy on Gender Education (2022), inclusive curricula should reflect the lived experiences of both genders and promote mutual respect and collaboration. This includes revising textbooks to eliminate sexist language and imagery, incorporating stories of female role models, and ensuring that learning materials are accessible to all learners regardless of gender or ability.
3. **Gender-sensitive teacher training is equally critical.** Teachers play a central role in shaping classroom dynamics and student outcomes. Training programs must equip educators with the skills to recognize and counteract gender bias, foster inclusive participation, and support the unique needs of girls. As highlighted by Invictus Africa (2024), gender-responsive education budgeting must include investments in professional development that promote equity in pedagogy and school culture. Teachers should be trained to use participatory methods, avoid discriminatory practices, and create safe spaces for girls to express themselves and thrive academically.
4. **Community engagement and advocacy are essential for sustaining gender-responsive literacy efforts.** In many Nigerian communities, traditional and religious leaders wield significant influence over educational decisions. Engaging these stakeholders in dialogue about the benefits of girls' education can help shift attitudes and reduce resistance. Community-based campaigns, parent-teacher associations, and local literacy committees can mobilize support and

monitor progress. The National Policy on Gender Education emphasizes the importance of grassroots involvement in promoting educational equity, noting that community ownership enhances accountability and relevance.

5. **Conditional cash transfers and incentives have proven effective in increasing girls' enrollment and retention.** These programs provide financial support to families on the condition that their daughters attend school regularly. In Nigeria, initiatives such as the Girls' Education Project (GEP) have demonstrated success in reducing dropout rates and delaying early marriage. By alleviating the economic burden of schooling, cash transfers make education a viable option for low-income households. Adeosun and Owolabi (2021) argue that such incentives must be accompanied by broader reforms to ensure long-term impact, including improvements in school infrastructure and teacher quality.
6. The use of indigenous languages and media enhances accessibility and cultural relevance. Literacy programs delivered in local languages are more effective in engaging learners, especially in rural areas where English proficiency may be limited. Media platforms—radio, television, and mobile apps—can disseminate educational content widely and reinforce classroom learning. Walter (2024) notes that integrating AI and digital literacy tools into education can further empower learners by fostering critical thinking and adaptability. In Nigeria, where linguistic diversity is vast, tailoring literacy initiatives to local contexts ensures that no group is left behind.

Recommendations and Way Forward for Gender-Responsive Literacy Education in Nigeria

To advance gender equity through literacy education in Nigeria, a strategic and sustained commitment is required across policy, funding, partnerships, and development planning. The following recommendations outline a comprehensive path forward.

1. Policy reforms must prioritize gender equity as a core objective of the national education agenda. This includes enforcing the National Policy on Gender Education, integrating gender-responsive budgeting, and revising outdated laws that hinder girls' access to education. Policies should mandate inclusive curricula, protect girls from early marriage and gender-based violence, and ensure safe learning environments. As Invictus Africa (2024) emphasizes, reforms must be backed by political will and measurable targets to ensure accountability and impact.
2. Investment in girls' education is critical to closing the literacy gap. Government and donor funding should prioritize infrastructure improvements, teacher training, and scholarship programs targeted at girls in marginalized communities. Adeosun and Owolabi (2021) argue that investing in girls' education yields high returns in health, economic growth, and democratic

participation. Resources must be allocated equitably across regions, with special attention to rural and conflict-affected areas where girls face the greatest barriers.

3. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) offer innovative solutions and scalability. Collaborations between government agencies, NGOs, tech companies, and local businesses can expand access to digital literacy tools, build community learning centers, and support mentorship programs. For example, partnerships with mobile network providers can deliver educational content via SMS or apps, reaching girls in remote areas. PPPs also foster innovation in curriculum design and teacher support, leveraging private sector expertise to enhance public education systems.
4. Literacy must be integrated into broader development agendas. Gender equity in education should not be treated as a standalone issue but as a cross-cutting priority in health, economic empowerment, and governance. Literacy programs should align with national development plans and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). As the Federal Ministry of Education (2022) notes, intersectoral collaboration is essential for addressing the root causes of gender disparity and ensuring that literacy initiatives contribute to holistic development.

Conclusion

Promoting gender equity in Nigeria through literacy education is not only a moral imperative but a strategic investment in national development. This article has explored the historical and socio-cultural roots of gender disparity, the current state of literacy access, and the barriers that continue to hinder progress—ranging from poverty and early marriage to infrastructure gaps and teacher bias. It has also highlighted the transformative power of literacy in empowering women and girls economically, socially, and politically, supported by case studies and success stories from community programs, NGOs, and digital platforms. To move forward, Nigeria must adopt inclusive strategies such as gender-sensitive curricula, teacher training, community engagement, and targeted incentives. Monitoring and evaluation systems must be strengthened to ensure transparency and accountability, while policy reforms and public-private partnerships should be leveraged to scale impact. Literacy must be integrated into broader development agendas, aligning with national priorities and global commitments like the Sustainable Development Goals. The call to action is clear: stakeholders at every level—government, civil society, educators, and communities—must work collaboratively to dismantle barriers and build inclusive systems that prioritize girls' education. A gender-equitable Nigeria is one where every girl can read, write, lead, and thrive. Through literacy, we can unlock the potential of millions and shape a future defined by justice, opportunity, and shared prosperity.

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CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER INEQUALITY AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT: EVIDENCE FROM SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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Introduction

Gender inequality in workplace is now becoming deep-rooted and systemic hindrances to the attainment of equitable socio-economic growth in all sectors of the economy and notably the hospitality sector. Within the hospitality industry, the issue is even more serious considering the gendered structure of occupational roles, hierarchical levels, and cultural expectations that shape)employment and promotional opportunities (Liu, 2020; Ukachukwu, 2024). Conventionally, the hospitality sector has been a feminized industry, with women concentrated in customer contact and support roles such as housekeeping, front office, and food service, while men dominate managerial, technical, and executive positions (Patwardhan et al., 2016). This occupational segregation not only limits the career advancement of women but also supports societal stereotypes about gender suitability for leadership and power (Brites da Silva et al., 2021).

From global perspective, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023) estimates that women constitute about 54% of workers in the hospitality sector but hold less than 20% of senior manager or executive positions. The disparity proves the existence of the metaphorical "glass ceiling" that hinders women's upward mobility, even in industries where they are most of the workforce (Maringa et al., 2023). Gender inequality in hospitality thus extends beyond numbers in employment, it encompasses unequal pay, access to training, career progression, and representation in decision-making (Liu et al., 2020). While in developing countries such as Nigeria, this skewness could also be compounded by many other socio-cultural expectations, patriarchal ideologies, and organizational structural obstacles (Ihemeje, 2016; Lagasi et al., 2016).

Hospitality and tourism is one of the fastest-growing non-oil sectors in Nigeria, with tremendous contributions to employment opportunities and regional economic development, particularly in urban regions such as Lagos, Ibadan, and Ado-Ekiti (Oyinloye et al., 2024). Despite its development, the sector mirrors broader gender disparities in the general labour market of the nation. Women constitute about 47% of Nigeria's total labour force but occupy less than 15% of senior management roles in hospitality-related organizations, based on the National

Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023). This underrepresentation is even worse in Southwest Nigeria, where socio-cultural expectations, educational disparities, and organizational biases intersect to support gendered career trajectories (Akinruwa et al., 2025; Oloso et al., 2025).

Southwestern states in Nigeria comprises Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ogun and Ekiti and are known as the epicenter of hospitality development, which boasts a concentration of hospitality businesses such as hotels, resorts and service-related businesses that cater to local and international clientele. However, evidence suggests that women professionals in these sectors experience constraints emanating from both institutional and cultural foundations. Although the zone has higher levels of education and urban exposure compared to other parts of the country, career development among females remains constrained by traditional gender roles, informal promotion processes, and limited access to capacity-building opportunities (Agboola, 2023; Ukachukwu, 2024). Similarly, Oyinloye et al. (2024) note that labour market dynamics in the hospitality industry in Nigeria and most especially in Southwest Nigeria exhibit an acute mismatch between the availability of skills and career progression. For instance, most women in hotel management hold mid-level supervisory positions but fail to progress to general management or ownership levels despite having the same level of qualifications as men. These patterns indicate that the inequality in hotel management is not merely a factor of individual lack of competencies but rather a manifestation of structural and institutionalized gendered prejudices embedded in the employment culture of the sector.

It is on this note this paper provides relevant information to explore the nature, determinants, and implications of gender inequality on career progression in hotel management in Southwest Nigeria. The rationale is that despite global and national advocacy for gender equality and inclusive development, the hospitality industry continues to practice asymmetrical power relations that bar women from leadership and decision-making roles (Ukachukwu, 2024; Maringa et al., 2023). It is expected that this paper will provide conceptual and theoretical foundations of gender inequality and career advancement in the hospitality industry, reveal patterns and evidence of inequality in hotel management at different levels and especially in southwest Nigeria and analyze the determinants of these disparities and implications.

Gender and Carrer Development

The word gender is typically beyond the biological which also include social, cultural, and psychological attributes associated with being male or female (Eagly & Wood, 2016). In the workplace, gender captures not only identity but also the culturally created expectations that frame participation, behaviour, and opportunity. In the hospitality industry for instance, gender has become a norm used in organization to regulates work relations, employment allocation, and careers in leadership (Maringa et al., 2023). Career development, on the other hand,

refers to upward progression of employees in an organizational hierarchy through promotion, professional development, or increased responsibility (Liu et al., 2020). It encompasses both objective measures which includes location, wages, and subjective opinions such as self-efficacy, acknowledgement, and contentment (Patwardhan et al., 2016).

The intersection between gender and career advancement is particularly salient in-service sectors such as the hospitality industry, where emotional labour, beauty appearance, and client contact are often gendered (Grosser & Moon, 2019). Women's inputs, although critical to the success of the industry, are undervalued since gender stereotypes associate men with power and women with care-giving roles (Brites da Silva et al., 2021). Because of this, gender is both a social categorization and structural constraint that guides career progressions, access to management posts, and reward patterns.

It has been discovered that even when women constitute most of the working population in a hospitality industry, for example, hotels and tourist attractions, they barely attain managerial parity with men (UNWTO, 2023). For instance, in Nigeria, Ihemeje (2016) observed that women constitute over 60% of front-line hospitality staff but never more than 25% of managers. This pattern is replicated in Southwest Nigeria, with hotels, and particularly the medium and large-sized ones, exhibiting considerable gender imbalances in managerial ranks (Oyinloye et al., 2024). Career advancement is thus still gendered work founded on institutional traditions, social conventions, and organizational power dynamics.

Gendered Career Pathways in the Hospitality Industry

The term gendered career path is often used to refer to gender-differentiated career patterns of men and women according to gendered evaluations of capability, availability, and suitability (Ferguson & Konrad, 2020). Career paths in hospitality management are normally institutionalized as vertical hierarchies from operational through supervisory and managerial ranks (Figure 1). However, this upward advancement is normally simpler for men, while women experience career plateaus or stagnation due to structural discrimination (Liu et al., 2020).

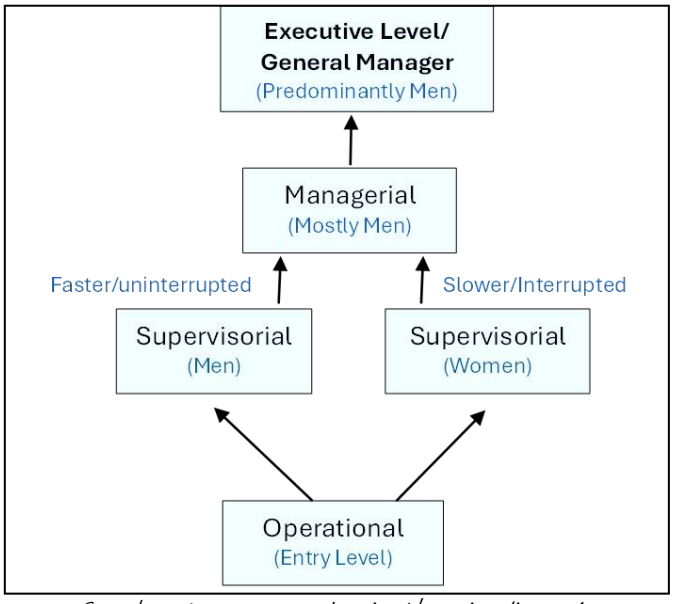

Figure 1: Gender Career Paths in Hospitality Management
Source: Adapted from Oyinloye et al., 2024

The feminization of hospitality jobs has occasioned paradoxical consequences. Whereas women are disproportionately represented in the lowest levels of the sector, their proportion declines as organizational position increases which is a process that has come to be described as "pyramidal segregation" (Kamanja et al., 2022). Women employees in most Nigerian hotels are disproportionately represented in housekeeping, food and beverage, and front office, while men are mainly represented in engineering, security, and executive management (Lagasi et al., 2016).

Furthermore, hospitality promotion systems tend to be informal and rely on subjective performance indicators, social relationships, and willingness to work extended hours (Tamunomiebi et al., 2021). Women are likely to be perceived as less available or committed to organizational demands, given cultural expectations for family duties (Ukachukwu, 2024). Gendered career paths thus are not necessarily determined by individual merit but by broader socio-organizational mechanisms in favour of masculine ideals of authority and leadership.

Dimensions of Workplace Inequality

Workplace inequality exists in multiple dimensions, each pointing towards a unique form of gendered disadvantage. Within the context of this study, this is categorized under vertical, horizontal and institutional inequality.

Vertical inequality refers to variation in hierarchical levels of decision-making and authority in companies. In hospitality, this is conveyed as the underrepresentation of females within middle and upper management levels even though they hold a numerical majority in lower levels (Liu et al., 2020). Promotion

practices that perpetuate vertical inequality engage male workers through informal mentorship and networking arrangements (Garavan et al., 2006).

Horizontal inequality, on the other hand, captures the unequal ratio of women to men between various occupational positions of similar rank (Ferguson & Konrad, 2020). Men are disproportionately represented in running and revenue-generating departments such as accounting, procurement, and security in Nigerian hotels, while women are disproportionately represented in roles perceived as an extension of domestic activities such as housekeeping and food service (Ihemeje, 2016). Such horizontal segmentation keeps women away from strategic managerial experiences to which they need to be exposed for career development.

Lastly is the institutional inequality underlying the organization and society, encompassing societal norms, policy, and access to education that shape gendered labour market outcomes (Scott & Martin, 2018). Institutional inequality in Nigeria is rooted in cultural gender role expectations, disadvantaged access to hospitality management education, and ineffective enforcement of workplace equity legislation (Agboola, 2023). These institutional factors create a self-reinforcing cycle when fewer women occupy prominent leadership roles, thereby reinforcing gender stereotypes within and beyond the industry. These dimensions help to capture the intricate multi-level nature of gender inequality in hotel management. When one level is resolved, it provides some level of progress in the other.

Concept of Leadership and Power Relations in Hotel Management

As with every other organization, hospitality organizational leadership entails coordination of teams, provision of quality service, and maintenance of brand reputation in competitive, customer-confronted environments (Akinruwa et al., 2025). Leadership structures within most Nigerian hotels, however, reflect patriarchal models of preference for male control, oftentimes limiting leadership competence to assertiveness, dominance, and willingness to work long hours—traditionally male characteristics (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Female applicants for leadership roles within hotel management experience what Eagly and Karau (2002) call role incongruity, whereby individuals' expectations of femininity (supportive, relational, nurturing) conflict with the perceived demands of leadership (authoritative, decisive, competitive). Role incongruity affects not only decisions regarding promotion but also others' views of female leaders among peers and subordinates (Ukachukwu, 2024). As a result, women serving in middle-management or supervisory positions adopt adaptive leadership styles that are centered on empathy and cooperation styles which, although effective, are undervalued in masculine organizational cultures (Maringa et al., 2023). This is also the case of power relations in hotel management where there is regulation access to critical resources such as mentorship time, training opportunities and networks of information (Lagasi et al., 2016).

Theoretical Perspectives on Gender Inequality in Hotel Management and Career Development

This chapter is hinged on congruity theory, the glass ceiling theory and institutional theory to gain perspectives on gender inequality in hotel management and career development. Role Congruity Theory, developed by Eagly and Karau (2002), describes how gender role stereotypes in society influence perceptions of leadership fit. According to the theory, leadership is commonly associated with genetic traits of assertiveness, dominance, and decisiveness the culturally masculine traits and communal traits of empathy, sensitivity, and cooperation are ascribed to femininity. When women aspire to leadership positions, they are violating gender norms, leading to prejudice and reduced evaluation of their leadership ability (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2007). They are played out subtly but pervasively in Nigerian hospitality. Hotel organizations, especially private sector ones, connect managerial capacity with toughness and discipline virtues traditionally attributed to men (Ukachukwu, 2024). Female managers are also commonly stereotyped as emotional, unstable, or overly relational, which lowers their chances of being considered for executive positions. This bias is openly evident in promotion decisions where decision-makers, primarily males, make decisions based on personal subjective opinions of "leadership presence" rather than measurable performance factors (Lagasi & Buba, 2023). Role congruity bias also influences workplace culture and interpersonal relationships. Women managers in most Nigerian hotels must "soften" their style to maintain social harmony, and their male counterparts are admired for assertiveness and hardness (Maringa et al., 2023). Therefore, role congruity theory provides an underlying psychological explanation of the tenacity of gendered leadership gaps in hotel management.

Glass Ceiling Theory on the other hand, describes the invisible organizational obstacles that dissuade qualified women from advancing to higher levels of power despite their identical credentials and experience (Cotter et al., 2001). The ceiling metaphor represents the structural limitations that are intrinsic in firm hierarchies, and the addition of glass indicates that such obstacles are typically not obvious, informal, and not necessarily transparent. These barriers can include denial of access to professional networks, gendered promotion policies, absence of mentorship, and stereotypic evaluation of the capabilities of women (Northouse, 2018). Within the context of Nigeria's hospitality industry, the glass ceiling is organizational and societal. Women occupy initial-level and service positions front office staff, waitresses, and housemaids but are systematically underrepresented within executive management and strategic management (Lagasi & Buba, 2023; Oyinloye et al., 2024). For instance, most hotel chains lack formal mentorship or succession planning procedures whereby female workers can acquire experience in leadership. Instead, promotion is often determined by informal patronage or gender-specific evaluation based on willingness to work long hours and travel, considered less appropriate to women's family obligations (Adebayo, 2021).

Meanwhile, Institutional Theory provides a macro-level account of why gender inequality is perpetuated by organizational cultures, regulatory institutions, and societal norms. Scott (2001) describes institutions as longstanding systems of beliefs, norms, and rules that shape social action and organizational routine. On this view, inequality in career advancement is not the product of managerial judgment or individual prejudice but of deeply rooted institutional logics that legitimize gender hierarchies (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996). Paternal traditions culturally ascribe women with most responsibility in caregiving as well as household work, constraining their capacity to hold tight schedules common with hotel management (Agboola, 2023). Legally, while Nigeria's constitution prohibits gender discrimination, weak compliance with policies regarding workplace fairness and the absence of labour regulations specifically for gender limit actual impacts (Adebayo, 2021). Educationally, women are less likely to take hospitality management programmes at tertiary levels, particularly technical or managerial specializations, due to social culture that supports "feminine" occupations in service or customer relations (Oyinloye et al., 2024). The model explained by these theories explain how gender inequality is perpetuated in a self-sustaining process: organizational expectations based on cultural assumptions; discrimination is legitimized by institutionalized practices through the promotion system; and institutional momentum ensures the continuation of these differences intergenerationally.

Evidence on Gender and Career Advancement in Hospitality Sector

Global evidence indicates that women revealed that women comprise a substantial proportion of the workforce, their numbers plunge drastically when it comes to top management and executive roles. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2022), women hold approximately 54% of the world's tourism and hospitality workforce; however, only 20% of them work in managerial or decision-making roles. This movement shows the "leaky pipeline" phenomenon, where women's proportion decreases step by step at each organizational level (Baum, 2015; Khan & Morrow, 2022). Specifically, women in the developed economies of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Western Europe have made measurable but skewed progress. For example, in the United States hotel sector, women hold around 30% of middle management roles but less than 10% of senior management roles (Catalyst, 2021). European Union figures also show that women's representation among hotel general management is below 15%, despite equality directives and positive action measures (European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2021). This is further aggravated by gender wage disparities where women working in the hospitality industry earn approximately 77 cents for every dollar earned by men in comparable jobs (ILO, 2021).

In African countries, gender inequalities also exist. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, evidence reveals a consistent pattern of occupational segmentation, with women in low-income, informal, seasonal labour with little social protection

(Chinomona & Sandada, 2020; Tichaawa & Mhlanga, 2015). Even in such locations where there are structured jobs, career progression for women is handicapped by social norms, limited managerial training opportunity, and work-life conflict pressures (Kinyua, 2021). In Kenya, for instance, women constitute about 60% of the workforce in the hospitality sector but only 12% of senior management (Kinyua, 2021). Such observations in Ghana and South Africa affirm that female managers suffer "double binds" and are required to demonstrate both exceptional competence as well as femininity to gain notice (Tichaawa & Mhlanga, 2015).

In Nigeria, gender imbalance in hospitality management mirrors global and regional trends but with unique socio-cultural and institutional processes. The hospitality industry hotels, restaurants, and tourism have recorded rapid expansion, especially in urban centers such as Lagos, Ibadan, and Ado-Ekiti. Women are well placed in working positions, but underrepresentation in administrative and executive levels is quite evident (Oyinloye et al., 2024; Ukachukwu, 2024). Empirical findings indicate that over 55% of workers in Nigeria's hospitality sector are women but fewer than 15% hold general manager or senior management positions (Tamunomiebi et al., 2021; Adebayo, 2021). Even in comparatively better states such as Ekiti and Lagos, women face barriers linked to entrenched patriarchal stereotypes, unequal policy application, and discriminatory work cultures. The hospitality environment in Southwest Nigeria precisely illustrates structural inequalities such as differential access to career progress, gender-stereotyping, and limited institutional provision for career advancement (Ihemeje, 2016). In addition, Lagasi and Buba's (2023) study of hotels in major Southwest cities confirmed that departmental heads were women only in 12% of instances, which were discovered to be primarily in front office and guest relations departments. On the other hand, technical and strategic roles such as operations, finance, and facilities management were more male dominated.

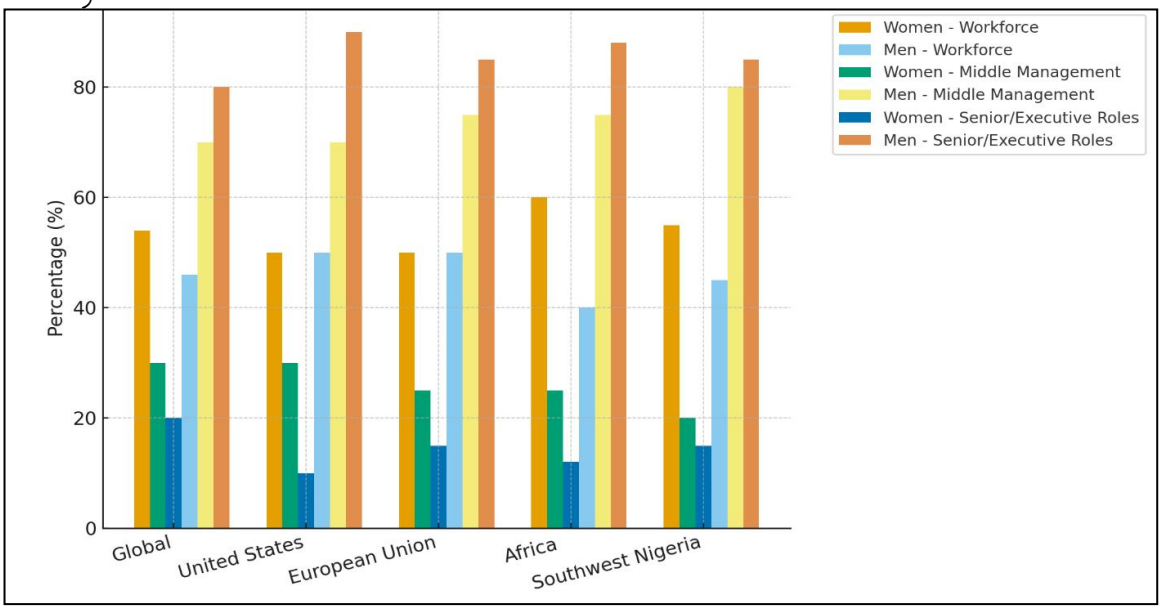

Figure 2: Gender Distribution Across Career Levels in the Hospitality Industry

Table 1: Evidence on Gender Inequality in Hospitality Management

Analytical Indicator	Global Evidence	African Context	Southwest Nigeria	Implication
Women's Workforce Share	<54% of total hospitality workforce (UNWTO, 2022)	<58% of workforce (Tichaawa & Mhlanga, 2015)	~55% of workforce (Tamunomiebi et al., 2021)	Women dominate the labour force numerically but are concentrated in low-wage, service roles.
Women in Management	20–25% globally (ILO, 2021)	12–18% (Kinyua, 2021)	10–15% (Lagasi & Buba, 2023)	Structural and cultural barriers restrict women's upward mobility despite high participation.
Gender Pay Gap	Women earn 77% of men's pay (ILO, 2021)	Women earn ~70% of men's pay (Baum, 2015)	Women earn ~68% of men's pay (Oyinloye et al., 2024)	Persistent wage disparities reflect occupational segregation and unequal access to higher positions.
Leadership Representation	<10% executive positions globally (Catalyst, 2021)	12% senior managers (Kinyua, 2021)	8–12% general managers (Ukachukwu, 2024)	Women's underrepresentation at leadership level illustrates a deep structural glass ceiling.
Institutional Support/Policy Implementation	Strong legal frameworks, weak enforcement (EIGE, 2021)	Weak legal protection (Chinomona & Sandada, 2020)	Weak enforcement of gender policy (Adebayo, 2021)	Ineffective institutional frameworks perpetuate systemic inequality.

Determinants of Inequality in Hotel Management

Owing to the problems of gender inequality in hotel management and career development in Southwest Nigeria, the following determinants are extracted from research and observations.

i. Organizational Culture and Promotion Practices

Women are penalized by these cultures, which may adopt more collaborative or empathetic leadership styles often undervalued in performance appraisals (Schein, 2001). For instance, promotional policies in most Nigerian hotels are extremely subjective, founded on personal discretion rather than open merit-based criteria (Oyinloye et al., 2024). Managers equate leadership potential with long

working hours, attendance at late shifts, and travel willingness conditions that unjustly penalize women due to family responsibilities (Ukachukwu, 2024). Moreover, empirical studies in Lagos and Ekiti States reveal that women receive delayed promotions compared to their equally qualified male counterparts, founded on gendered presuppositions of commitment and capacity (Ihemeje, 2016). Organizational context thus facilitates systemic exclusion via naturalization of informal promotional standards which happen to disadvantage women.

ii. Socio-Cultural Expectations and Family Roles

Nigerian socio-cultural expectations are an important external driver of workplace inequality. The gender cultural model of most Nigerian societies is based on traditional gender-role differentiation where men are breadwinners and women are primary caregivers (Adebayo, 2021). The roles create a double burden for hospitality women because the industry demands irregular working hours, weekend working, and high mobility. Consequently, women suffer from role conflict between work demands and family responsibilities (Lagasi & Buba, 2023). This conflict is also worsened by social perceptions that women working in hotels are morally loose, a reputation which discourages family and societal support (Ukachukwu, 2024). As such, many women in Southwest Nigeria voluntarily limit their own career advancement to avoid social stigmatization or destabilization of marriage.

iii. Informal Networks, Mentorship, and Access to Opportunities

The structure of professional networks within the hospitality industry also sustains gender inequality. Informal networks typically formed through socialization, after-work events, or industry organizations are critical for information sharing, mentoring, and career advancement (Maringa et al., 2023). Such networks are often male dominated, and however, limit the access of women to sponsorship and mentorship necessary for career advancement (Ting Liu et al., 2020). Women managers in Nigerian hotels often lament not being part of influential decision-making circles where career-defining opportunities are discussed (Ihemeje, 2016). In addition, mentorship programmes for women are scarce, and where present, they are neither formal nor consistent (Ukachukwu, 2024).

iv. Weak Institutional Policy and Regulatory Oversight

Despite gender policies and international treatises such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Nigeria's National Gender Policy (2006), implementation within the hospitality sector is more symbolic (Adebayo, 2021). There is a policy-practice paradox between formal equality and operational reality. Hospitality organizations lack overt gender equity policies or internal processes to address discrimination and harassment (Tamunomiebi et al., 2021). Institutional regulation by bodies such as the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) and state tourism boards seldom includes gender audit or diversity reporting requirements. Such an

institutional lacuna reinforces organizational discretion and perpetuates gender inequality invisibility in performance measurement systems. So, even if women demonstrate competence, promotion decisions are made based on subjective prejudice rather than policy-led factors.

v. Education, Training, and Human Capital Constraints

Education and job training are pivotal to career advancement in hospitality management, yet women have disparate access to these resources. Despite the rise in Nigerian women's tertiary enrollment, vocational and managerial training within hospitality remains gender-biased (Agboola, 2023). Women are more likely to be directed to service-oriented courses such as catering or housekeeping, whereas men dominate technical and administrative routes to managerial roles (Ihemeje, 2016). The skewed division of development opportunities within organizations intensifies this disparity. Most hotels provide male employees with preference in externally sponsored development programmes, leadership training, and international exposure, reinforcing the belief that men are better placed to assume strategic positions (Oyinloye et al., 2024). Also, financial constraint and household obligations deny women the opportunity to attain professional qualifications or graduate studies required for upward mobility.

Conclusion

The persistence of gender inequality in hotel management and career management and especially in Southwest Nigeria is not only an articulation of individual barriers but one that is deeply entrenched in structural, cultural, and institutional factors. The evidence substantiates that inequality is horizontal and vertical which cuts across occupational roles, wage structures, and leadership representation. The interwoveness of organizational culture, patriarchal social expectations, lenient institutional monitoring, and limited access to education and mentorship forms a complex web that ties down women's professional mobility.

Policy and management intervention to correct this imbalance needs to be multi-pronged and should include gender-sensitive human resource reforms, institutionalization of transparent promotion criteria, leadership and mentorship development programs for women, and stricter enforcement of national gender policies within the hospitality sector. Regular gender audits and reporting at corporate and regulatory levels are also required. Bridging the gender gap in hotel management is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic imperative to enhance organizational performance, innovation, and service excellence in Nigeria's competitive hospitality landscape.

Policy Way Forward

1. Hospitality organizations should adopt transparent, merit-based recruitment, appraisal, and promotion systems that minimize subjective bias and ensure equitable career advancement opportunities for women.

2. Structured leadership training and formal mentorship programmes should be instituted to enhance women's managerial competencies, professional visibility, and access to strategic networks within the hospitality sector.
3. Family-friendly workplace policies, including flexible scheduling and supportive parental provisions, should be implemented to reduce work–family conflict and enable women's sustained career progression.
4. Tourism and labour regulatory bodies should enforce gender equity standards through mandatory gender audits, reporting mechanisms, and compliance monitoring within hospitality establishments.
5. Deliberate investment in women's access to hospitality management education, executive training, and professional development programmes is essential to strengthen leadership pipelines and dismantle structural inequalities.

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CHAPTER FIVE

GENDER EQUITY AND ENROLMENT DYNAMICS IN SCIENCE, TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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Introduction

Gender equity in education refers to the principle of providing fair and impartial opportunities for learners of all genders to access, participate in, and benefit from educational systems without discrimination or bias. Gender, in this context, is understood as the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men, women, and other gender identities, which differ from biological sex (Aina, 2020). In the realm of Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) education, gender equity is critical because it ensures that both male and female learners have equal chances to enroll in, complete, and thrive in these fields that are often perceived as gendered in nature. Historically, STV education has been dominated by male participation in technical and engineering-related disciplines, while females are often steered toward less technical or service-oriented programs due to societal stereotypes, cultural expectations, and structural barriers (Okeke & Anyanwu, 2021).

The issue of enrollment dynamics in STV education is closely linked to gender equity because participation rates often reflect deep-rooted inequalities in access and representation. Enrollment dynamics refer to the patterns, trends, and shifts in student participation over time, influenced by factors such as socio-economic background, cultural perceptions, government policies, and institutional practices (Nwogu & Onwudinjo, 2022). In Nigeria and many other countries, these dynamics reveal a persistent gender gap in certain technical and vocational fields, despite the global push for inclusive education and skills development. The UNESCO (2023) Global Education Monitoring Report emphasizes that equitable access to STV education is essential for fostering national economic growth, technological advancement, and sustainable development, yet this can only be achieved if systemic gender barriers are dismantled.

The push for gender equity in STV education is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic economic imperative. A gender-balanced workforce in technical and vocational sectors enhances innovation, expands the talent pool, and promotes diversified problem-solving approaches (World Bank, 2021). However,

achieving this balance requires a critical examination of how cultural norms, curriculum design, and policy implementation influence enrollment trends. As STV education continues to serve as a vital pathway for equipping individuals with the practical skills needed for the labor market, understanding and addressing gender disparities in enrollment remains a key priority for educators, policymakers, and development agencies alike.

Conceptualizing Gender Equity in Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) Education

Gender equity in Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) education encompasses the fair treatment, access, and opportunities for learners of all genders to participate, progress, and excel in educational pathways without discrimination or systemic bias. It goes beyond mere equality, which implies giving everyone the same resources, by acknowledging and addressing the distinct needs, challenges, and barriers that different genders face in accessing and benefiting from education. Gender, in this sense, refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, attributes, and expectations that societies assign to individuals based on their perceived identity, and which often influence participation patterns in education and employment (Aina, 2020). In STV education, gender equity requires the removal of structural and cultural impediments that perpetuate the under-representation of one gender in specific disciplines, while promoting policies and practices that encourage balanced participation.

The concept of gender equity in STV education is anchored on the understanding that historical, socio-cultural, and economic factors have shaped participation in technical and vocational fields in gendered ways. Globally and within Nigeria, technical and vocational education has traditionally been male-dominated, particularly in engineering, construction, and mechanical-related fields, while females have been over-represented in trades such as tailoring, hospitality, or home economics (Okeke & Anyanwu, 2021). These patterns are not the result of ability differences but are largely driven by gender stereotypes, limited exposure, discriminatory practices, and policy gaps. According to UNESCO (2023), equitable participation in STV education is essential for bridging gender gaps in the labor market and ensuring that both men and women can contribute equally to national economic growth and innovation.

Conceptualizing gender equity within the STV framework also involves understanding the enrollment, retention, and achievement dynamics that affect both genders differently. Enrollment dynamics refer to the trends, proportions, and shifts in participation between males and females over time, often influenced by factors such as socio-economic status, educational policy interventions, parental support, and institutional orientation (Nwogu & Onwudinjo, 2022). In Nigeria, despite policy initiatives like the National Gender Policy on Education, disparities persist due to inadequate career guidance, low awareness of STV opportunities for girls, and cultural norms that sometimes discourage female participation in certain

trades (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021). This reinforces the need for targeted interventions that not only create equal access but also ensure an enabling environment for participation and success.

Moreover, gender equity in STV education is intrinsically linked to global development agendas, particularly the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education, and Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The World Bank (2021) underscores that removing gender barriers in technical and vocational training expands the talent pool, enhances economic productivity, and fosters innovation in industries that require diverse perspectives. Thus, conceptualizing gender equity in STV education requires a multidimensional approach that addresses policy reform, institutional practices, cultural orientation, and curriculum inclusivity, ensuring that all genders can access, benefit from, and contribute meaningfully to the STV sector.

Historical Overview of Gender Participation in STV Education

The historical trajectory of gender participation in Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) education reflects deeply entrenched socio-cultural norms, economic structures, and policy orientations that have shaped male and female involvement in these fields over time. In many parts of the world, including Nigeria, STV education has traditionally been viewed through a gendered lens, with technical and engineering-related trades largely reserved for males, while vocational areas such as catering, tailoring, and home economics were considered more appropriate for females (Okeke & Anyanwu, 2021). This division of educational pathways is rooted in historical gender roles that associated men with industrial and mechanical work and women with domestic and caregiving roles. Consequently, access to STV education in its early forms was not equitably distributed, and female enrollment in science- and technology-intensive trades remained significantly low.

During the colonial and immediate post-independence periods in Nigeria, educational policies prioritized academic schooling over vocational training, and where technical education existed, it was often geared toward preparing men for industrial labor (Nwogu & Onwudinjo, 2022). Girls' education was more focused on domestic sciences, reflecting the prevailing belief that women's contributions should center on home management and family welfare (Aina, 2020). This gendered approach to curriculum design and career guidance institutionalized disparities in participation, with male dominance in fields such as carpentry, welding, electrical installation, and mechanical engineering persisting for decades.

The global push for gender equality in education, which gained momentum in the 1970s and 1980s, began to influence reforms in technical and vocational education. International frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 and UNESCO's initiatives on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) encouraged member states, including Nigeria, to broaden female participation in non-traditional

fields. However, despite these policy directions, societal perceptions and systemic biases continued to limit girls' enrollment in STEM-related STV programs, as reported by UNESCO (2023).

By the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Nigeria introduced several policy measures to improve gender balance in STV education, such as the National Gender Policy in Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021), which emphasizes equitable access to all fields of study. Scholarship schemes, awareness campaigns, and curriculum reforms have sought to address gender imbalances. Nevertheless, the historical legacy of gender stereotyping in career choices still influences enrollment patterns, with male students continuing to dominate in engineering, construction, and automotive trades, while females are over-represented in service-oriented programs (World Bank, 2021).

In recent years, there has been gradual progress, partly due to advocacy from civil society organizations, donor agencies, and gender-focused educational interventions. Programs promoting girls in STEM and encouraging boys to participate in fields traditionally considered female-dominated are slowly reshaping the participation landscape. However, the historical patterns remain significant because they have created structural inequalities that modern reforms must consciously dismantle. Understanding this historical background is therefore critical to designing policies and practices that can achieve genuine gender equity in STV education in Nigeria and beyond.

Theoretical Perspectives on Gender Equity in Education

The discourse on gender equity in education is grounded in various theoretical perspectives that explain how social, cultural, economic, and institutional factors influence access, participation, and outcomes for learners of different genders. These perspectives provide conceptual frameworks for understanding the root causes of disparities and for formulating strategies to promote equitable educational opportunities. In the context of Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) education, these theories are essential in examining why gender gaps persist and how they can be bridged.

One significant framework is **Gender Socialization Theory**, which posits that from early childhood, individuals are socialized into culturally defined gender roles that influence their attitudes, aspirations, and educational choices (Aina, 2020). This theory helps explain why girls may be encouraged toward domestic and service-oriented subjects, while boys are steered toward science, engineering, and technical fields. In Nigeria, such socialization patterns have historically reinforced male dominance in technical and vocational training, thereby shaping enrollment dynamics in STV education (Okeke & Anyanwu, 2021).

Feminist Theory also plays a crucial role in understanding gender equity in education. It critiques the patriarchal structures that perpetuate male privilege and marginalize women's access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making

power. Within STV education, feminist perspectives highlight how curriculum content, teacher attitudes, and institutional policies may unintentionally reinforce gender stereotypes, and they advocate for reforms that dismantle these barriers (UNESCO, 2023). This perspective emphasizes the need for policies that address structural inequalities rather than focusing solely on individual access.

Another relevant approach is **Human Capital Theory**, which underscores the economic rationale for investing in equitable education. It argues that increasing women's participation in technical and vocational training contributes to a more skilled workforce, drives innovation, and enhances national productivity (World Bank, 2021). From this perspective, gender equity in STV education is not just a moral or social imperative but also a strategic economic policy that benefits society as a whole.

Additionally, **Social Justice Theory**, particularly as articulated by Rawls (1971) and later educational theorists, views equitable access to education as a fundamental right. It posits that inequalities are only acceptable if they benefit the least advantaged members of society. Applied to STV education, this theory supports affirmative action policies, targeted scholarships, and inclusive curriculum reforms to correct historical imbalances (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021).

Finally, **Intersectionality Theory** deepens the analysis by recognizing that gender inequality in education does not operate in isolation but intersects with other forms of disadvantage, such as poverty, ethnicity, disability, and geographic location (Crenshaw, 1989; Nwogu & Onwudinjo, 2022). This lens is particularly useful in Nigeria, where rural girls, for example, face compounded challenges in accessing STV education due to both gender norms and infrastructural limitations.

Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of gender equity in education by combining socio-cultural analysis, economic justification, and justice-oriented principles. They guide both the diagnosis of gender disparities and the design of interventions that are context-specific, inclusive, and transformative. For policymakers, educators, and researchers, applying these theories to STV education helps ensure that equity initiatives address not only enrollment numbers but also the deeper structural and attitudinal barriers that shape educational outcomes.

Socio-Cultural Influences on Gender Participation in STV Programs

Socio-cultural factors play a decisive role in shaping patterns of gender participation in Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) education. These influences are deeply embedded in societal values, traditions, and norms that prescribe distinct roles and expectations for men and women. In many societies, including Nigeria, cultural perceptions of gender-appropriate work have historically dictated the types of subjects and career paths deemed suitable for each gender. This has resulted in the under-representation of women in technical, science, and engineering-oriented STV programs and the concentration of men in these same fields, while

women are often over-represented in domestic or service-oriented disciplines (Okeke & Anyanwu, 2021).

One of the most significant socio-cultural influences is **traditional gender role expectations**. From early childhood, boys are often encouraged to engage in activities that promote spatial reasoning, mechanical skills, and problem-solving, while girls are directed toward caregiving, domestic tasks, and arts-related activities (Aina, 2020). This early socialization not only shapes personal interests but also builds societal stereotypes that certain STV fields, such as welding, electrical installation, and mechanical engineering, are "male" professions, while areas like catering, tailoring, and cosmetology are "female" domains. Such stereotypes contribute to the persistent gender imbalance in STV enrollment (UNESCO, 2023).

Family and community influence is another critical factor. In many Nigerian communities, parental expectations and attitudes toward education significantly determine a child's academic trajectory. Families often channel male children into technical or science-related STV programs, perceiving them as more lucrative and prestigious, while steering female children toward vocational areas linked to domestic life or "acceptable" women's work (Nwogu & Onwudinjo, 2022). In rural areas, this is further compounded by limited exposure to female role models in technical fields, reinforcing the belief that such careers are unsuitable for women.

Religious and cultural norms can also impose restrictions on female participation in certain STV programs. In conservative communities, concerns about mixed-gender training environments, the physical demands of technical trades, or the perceived incompatibility of such careers with women's roles as wives and mothers often discourage female enrollment (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021). These norms create implicit barriers, even when formal policies advocate for equal access.

Moreover, **peer influence and societal perceptions** play an understated but powerful role in shaping gender participation. Girls who choose male-dominated technical programs may face social ridicule, stigmatization, or even discouragement from peers, while boys opting for traditionally female-dominated fields may be viewed as deviating from masculine norms. Such pressures can deter students from pursuing their true interests, perpetuating gendered enrollment patterns in STV education (World Bank, 2021).

The impact of these socio-cultural influences is evident in enrollment statistics. Despite advocacy and policy reforms aimed at promoting gender equity, male students continue to dominate in engineering, construction, and ICT-related STV programs, while female students are more prevalent in food technology, fashion design, and beauty services (UNESCO, 2023). This imbalance is not merely a reflection of individual choice but rather the cumulative effect of long-standing cultural conditioning, social pressures, and structural limitations.

Addressing these socio-cultural influences requires multifaceted interventions, including targeted career guidance programs, community sensitization campaigns, the promotion of female role models in technical fields, and inclusive curriculum reforms. Without confronting the deep-seated cultural norms that shape gender participation, efforts to achieve equity in STV education will remain constrained. Therefore, while policies and infrastructural improvements are vital, lasting change in gender dynamics within STV programs must engage directly with the cultural attitudes and beliefs that sustain gender disparities.

Policy Frameworks and Legal Provisions for Gender Equity in STV Education

Policy frameworks and legal provisions serve as essential instruments for advancing gender equity in Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) education by establishing clear guidelines and mandates that ensure fair access and participation of all genders. These frameworks are vital for addressing longstanding gender disparities that have historically limited opportunities, especially for women and other marginalized groups, in technical and vocational fields.

At the international level, several conventions and agreements have shaped national policies aimed at promoting gender equality in education. The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)** highlighted the importance of removing gender-based barriers in education and training, emphasizing technical and vocational education as critical areas for intervention (Kabeer, 2019). Similarly, the **International Labour Organization's (ILO) Vocational Education Recommendation (2015)** advocates for gender-sensitive policies to foster inclusive vocational training systems (ILO, 2020).

Within Nigeria and other developing countries, national policy frameworks have evolved to align with these international standards. The **National Policy on Education (NPE)** and the **National Gender Policy (NGP)** explicitly prioritize gender equity, calling for equal enrollment opportunities and gender-responsive curricula in STV education (Ezeh & Chukwu, 2022). Furthermore, the **Child Rights Act (2003)** reinforces the right of every child to education without discrimination, providing a legal backing against gender-based exclusion (Abdulraheem & Olufemi, 2021).

Despite the existence of these robust policy frameworks, challenges remain in effective implementation and enforcement. Scholars argue that insufficient funding, weak institutional capacity, and socio-cultural resistance often hinder the realization of policy goals (Balogun & Olaniyan, 2023). For example, policies mandating gender quotas in technical colleges face resistance due to entrenched stereotypes and lack of monitoring mechanisms (Ogundipe & Yusuf, 2022). To address these gaps, there is growing advocacy for integrating gender mainstreaming across all levels of education governance, improving data collection systems for gender dis-aggregated statistics, and strengthening collaboration

between government agencies, civil society, and international partners (Adeyemi, 2020).

Additionally, legal instruments such as anti-discrimination laws and sexual harassment policies in educational institutions are increasingly recognized as crucial for creating safe and inclusive learning environments. The enforcement of these laws ensures that female and male students can participate without fear of bias or violence, which significantly impacts retention and success in STV programs (Okoro & Nwafor, 2021). Therefore, policy frameworks and legal provisions provide a necessary foundation for advancing gender equity in STV education. However, realizing their full potential requires sustained political commitment, adequate resources, community engagement, and effective monitoring systems to overcome persistent socio-cultural and institutional barriers.

Enrollment Trends and Patterns in STV Education: A Gender Perspective

Enrollment trends and patterns in Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) education reveal persistent gender disparities that reflect historical, socio-cultural, and institutional influences on educational participation. While global and national efforts have sought to promote gender equity in technical and vocational pathways, evidence from various contexts, including Nigeria, indicates that male dominance remains pronounced in most science- and engineering-oriented STV programs, whereas females are concentrated in traditionally "feminine" fields such as catering, tailoring, and beauty services (Okeke & Anyanwu, 2021). These patterns are not simply a matter of personal preference but are shaped by a combination of societal norms, career guidance practices, and structural barriers that limit access for certain groups.

In Nigeria, enrollment data over the past two decades shows a slow but uneven increase in female participation in STV education. According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2021), although there has been a rise in the number of girls enrolling in information and communication technology (ICT) and environmental sciences within technical colleges and polytechnics, male students still account for the majority in engineering, construction, and mechanical trades. Conversely, female students dominate in fashion design, catering, and secretarial studies, reflecting entrenched gender stereotypes. This trend aligns with UNESCO's (2023) Global Education Monitoring Report, which emphasizes that across many developing countries, gender segregation persists in vocational training due to deep-rooted cultural norms and limited exposure to diverse career options.

A notable development is the gradual diversification of female enrollment in some urban areas, driven by advocacy campaigns, targeted scholarships, and mentorship programs that promote women in non-traditional trades. Initiatives such as the "Girls in STEM" and "Women in Technical Education" programs have contributed to modest increases in female representation in fields like electrical installation, automotive repair, and welding (World Bank, 2021). However, these gains are often localized and have yet to produce significant nationwide parity.

Rural areas, in particular, still experience pronounced gender gaps, with limited infrastructure, inadequate career counseling, and parental resistance contributing to low female enrollment in technical trades (Nwogu & Onwudinjo, 2022).

The patterns of male enrollment in STV education are also noteworthy. While men dominate technical and engineering fields, they are underrepresented in trades perceived as "feminine," such as catering, home economics, and certain health-related vocational programs. This underrepresentation is linked to societal perceptions that discourage men from pursuing careers in caregiving or domestic service sectors (Aina, 2020). As a result, gender imbalance in STV education is bidirectional, affecting both men's and women's access to non-traditional fields.

Furthermore, policy reforms aimed at improving gender equity have had mixed results. The introduction of the National Gender Policy in Education and the integration of gender mainstreaming strategies in TVET curricula have led to increased awareness and some enrollment shifts. Yet, without sustained monitoring, adequate funding, and widespread community engagement, these policies have struggled to dismantle the long-standing enrollment patterns that perpetuate occupational segregation (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021).

Barriers to Female and Male Participation in STV Education

Participation in Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) education is shaped by multiple interrelated barriers that affect both male and female learners, albeit in different ways. These barriers emerge from socio-cultural norms, institutional practices, economic constraints, and policy gaps that limit equitable access and retention in STV programs. Addressing them is critical for achieving balanced gender representation and maximizing the potential of technical and vocational education as a driver of national development. The major barriers include:

1. **Socio-Cultural Norms and Gender Stereotypes**: Deeply entrenched cultural beliefs continue to dictate what is considered appropriate work for men and women. In Nigeria, girls are often steered toward service-oriented or domestic trades, while boys are directed toward engineering, construction, and mechanical fields (Okeke & Anyanwu, 2021). This early socialization reinforces occupational segregation and limits exploration of non-traditional fields by both genders.
2. **Lack of Female and Male Role Models in Non-Traditional Fields**: The scarcity of visible role models—women in engineering or men in caregiving trades—discourages students from breaking gender norms. Without relatable success stories, learners may perceive certain fields as unattainable or socially unacceptable (UNESCO, 2023).
3. **Parental and Community Influence**: Parents and community leaders often exert strong influence over career choices, especially in rural areas. In some cases, parents may discourage girls from enrolling in physically demanding technical courses or boys from pursuing trades seen as "feminine" (Nwogu & Onwudinjo, 2022).

4. **Economic Constraints and Opportunity Costs**: Poverty limits the ability of many families to support children's education, especially in specialized STV programs that require tools, materials, or uniforms. Girls are more likely to be withdrawn from school to assist with domestic chores or early marriage, while boys may be pushed into income-generating activities instead of completing their training (Aina, 2020).
5. **Institutional Bias and Curriculum Design**: Some STV institutions still have gender-biased admission practices or learning environments that are unwelcoming to one gender. For example, workshop facilities and safety gear may not be designed with female learners in mind, or training schedules may conflict with domestic responsibilities (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021).
6. **Harassment and Safety Concerns**: Female students in male-dominated technical fields sometimes face sexual harassment, intimidation, or discrimination from peers and instructors. Similarly, male students entering female-dominated trades may experience ridicule or social exclusion (World Bank, 2021). These hostile environments discourage retention and success.
7. **Limited Career Guidance and Counseling**: Inadequate career counseling in secondary schools and communities means that many students are unaware of the full range of STV opportunities. Counselors may also unconsciously reinforce gender stereotypes in advising students (UNESCO, 2023).
8. **Geographic and Infrastructure Limitations**: In rural areas, long distances to technical schools, poor transportation, and lack of boarding facilities disproportionately affect girls, whose mobility may be more restricted by cultural norms. Boys in such contexts may also face difficulty accessing training facilities for non-traditional fields (Nwogu & Onwudinjo, 2022).
9. **Policy Implementation Gaps**: While policies such as the National Gender Policy in Education aim to promote equity, weak enforcement, inadequate funding, and lack of monitoring hinder their effectiveness in changing enrollment and participation patterns (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021).
10. **Peer Influence and Social Stigma**: Peers can either encourage or discourage participation in non-traditional STV fields. Boys in nursing or tailoring programs may face stigma for choosing "feminine" careers, while girls in welding or automotive courses may be labeled as defying cultural expectations (Aina, 2020).

These barriers demonstrate that gender inequities in STV education are not the result of a single factor but rather a combination of social, economic, institutional, and policy-related challenges. Addressing them requires a holistic approach involving policy reform, community sensitization, improved institutional practices, and targeted financial and mentorship support for underrepresented genders in specific trades.

Strategies for Promoting Gender Equity in STV Enrollment

Promoting gender equity in Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) education requires multifaceted strategies that address the social, cultural, economic, and institutional barriers hindering balanced enrollment. The following key strategies have been identified in recent research and policy frameworks as effective measures to increase equitable participation of all genders in STV programs:

1. **Policy Formulation and Enforcement**: Developing and rigorously enforcing gender-sensitive policies within educational institutions and at national levels is critical. Policies like Nigeria's National Gender Policy in Education provide a framework to promote equal access and must be backed by monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure compliance (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021).
2. **Community Sensitization and Advocacy**: Engaging parents, community leaders, and cultural influencers through awareness campaigns can help challenge and change traditional gender norms that restrict participation. Such grassroots advocacy is essential to shift perceptions about what careers are appropriate for boys and girls (Okeke & Anyanwu, 2021).
3. **Gender-Responsive Curriculum and Learning Environment**: Curriculum design should be inclusive and free from gender bias, highlighting contributions of women and men in various technical fields. Moreover, learning environments, including workshops and laboratories, should be made safe, accessible, and welcoming for all genders (UNESCO, 2023).
4. **Role Model and Mentorship Programs**: Establishing mentorship initiatives and showcasing successful female and male professionals in non-traditional STV fields can inspire students and demonstrate that career choices should not be limited by gender stereotypes (World Bank, 2021).
5. **Targeted Scholarships and Financial Support**: Providing scholarships, bursaries, and material support specifically for underrepresented genders in certain fields helps reduce economic barriers that disproportionately affect female students or boys in female-dominated trades (Nwogu & Onwudinjo, 2022).
6. **Improved Career Guidance and Counseling**: Strengthening career counseling services in schools with a focus on gender equity ensures that students receive accurate information about STV opportunities and are encouraged to explore non-traditional fields without bias (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021).
7. **Safe and Supportive Institutional Policies**: Implementing strict policies against harassment and discrimination, alongside establishing complaint and support mechanisms, can create safer environments that encourage retention and success for all students (UNESCO, 2023).
8. **Infrastructure Development and Accessibility**: Investing in boarding facilities, transportation, and gender-sensitive infrastructure in STV institutions, especially in rural areas, helps remove physical barriers to enrollment and participation (Okeke & Anyanwu, 2021).

9. **Engagement of the Private Sector and NGOs**: Partnerships with private companies and non-governmental organizations can provide practical training opportunities, internships, and career exposure programs that actively encourage diverse gender participation (World Bank, 2021).
10. **Monitoring and Data Collection**: Establishing robust systems for gender disaggregated data collection on enrollment, retention, and completion rates allows policymakers and educators to track progress, identify gaps, and tailor interventions effectively (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021).

These strategies underscore the need for a comprehensive approach that combines policy, community engagement, institutional reform, and targeted support to foster gender equity in STV enrollment. While challenges persist, coordinated efforts among government agencies, educational institutions, communities, and development partners can create a more inclusive and balanced technical and vocational education system.

Conclusion

Gender equity in Science, Technical, and Vocational (STV) education remains a critical issue shaped by a complex interplay of socio-cultural norms, historical legacies, policy frameworks, and institutional practices. Despite international and national efforts to promote inclusive access, enrollment patterns in Nigeria and similar contexts continue to reflect significant gender disparities. Women remain underrepresented in many technical and engineering fields, while men are often absent in service-oriented vocational trades. This imbalance limits the full utilization of human capital and perpetuates occupational segregation.

Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that combines robust policy enforcement, community sensitization, gender-responsive curricula, and targeted support such as scholarships and mentorship. Equally important are safe and inclusive learning environments and improved career guidance to encourage students to pursue non-traditional fields regardless of gender. Theoretical frameworks such as gender socialization and intersectionality highlight the need to consider the broader social context and overlapping disadvantages faced by learners.

Ultimately, achieving gender equity in STV education is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic imperative for economic growth and sustainable development. By dismantling barriers and fostering inclusive participation, STV education can contribute to a diversified workforce capable of driving innovation and addressing complex challenges. Continued commitment from governments, educators, communities, and development partners is essential to realize this transformative goal.

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CHAPTER SIX

GENDER EQUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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Introduction

The pursuit of gender equality in educational leadership is a multifaceted endeavor, globally recognized as essential for equitable and effective educational systems (Al-Naqbi & Aderibigbe, 2024). Despite this widespread acknowledgment, there exist significant disparities in the representation of women in high-level leadership positions within educational institutions across various nations (Thien et al., 2025). This underrepresentation is particularly notable given the increasing recognition of women's contributions to educational development and the documented benefits of diverse leadership perspectives (Dahlan, 2023). For instance, in the United States, women constituted only 26.4% of public-school superintendents in 2020, with women of color making up a mere 3% of this cohort, illustrating a severe gendered leadership gap that has been exacerbated by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Gürsoy, 2023). Such statistics underscore the deep-seated gender stratification within the educational leadership hierarchy, where an estimated 80 years would be required to achieve proportional representation of women at the superintendency level (Clark-Saboda & Lemke, 2023). mitigation measures against gender inequality be it in education leadership or any level or field. Integrating women fully into educational leadership positions remains one of the major challenges facing many countries."

Even though "women everywhere are investing in education more than ever before, and although equity legislation has found its way into most countries, there is no significant breakthrough into educational leadership as women remain only a small fraction of those in leadership positions. This has, as a result, perpetuated a situation which has seen the growing gap in attaining gender equality in educational leadership. Avgeri (2015), articulated that any form of inequality which disadvantages one gender over the other remains a serious impediment towards attaining sustainable development. Having equitable access to leadership positions and resources creates a common platform through which male and female are well able to significantly contribute towards effective utilisation of resources towards a common development agenda (African Union 2014). By virtual of gender

equity being a cardinal ingredient for sustainable development, this research seeks to provide a detailed understanding as to what challenges affected its attainment in educational leadership. This is key towards establishing lasting solutions or mitigation measures against gender inequality be it in education leadership or any level or field. Integrating women fully into educational leadership positions remains one of the major challenges facing many countries (Martínez et al., 2020)." Indeed, despite substantial research over the past three decades highlighting gender inequalities in educational leadership, these disparities remain a focal point for scholarly inquiry, indicating a persistent gap between policy aspirations and practical realities (Fuller et al., 2021). This ongoing challenge underscores the need for a deeper examination of the underlying systemic and cultural barriers that impede women's advancement in educational leadership roles (Hartinah et al., 2025).

Theoretical Framework - Critical Feminist Theory

This study is grounded in Critical Feminist Theory (CFT), a framework that critiques the patriarchal structures that sustain gender discrimination and power imbalances in society. According to Smith (2018), Feminist Theory enables one to understand and challenge issues to do with gender inequality. CFT provides a critical lens for understanding the power relations that hinder achieving and maintaining leadership roles within schools (Mahlangu, 2021). Key scholars, including Bell Hooks, Judith Butler, and Kimberlee Crenshaw, have advanced this theory, with Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality being especially influential (Frost & Elichaoff, 2014). Intersectionality examines how overlapping identities, like race, class, and gender, shape distinct experiences of discrimination and privilege (Pennycook, 2021; Hunt, 2018). The central principles of CFT relevant to this research are patriarchy, which describes male-dominated systems that marginalise women and non-male genders, and gender inequality, which highlights systemic obstacles to equitable rights and resources based on gender (Mahlangu, 2021). The Theory of Intersectionality shows how race, class, and gender, among other identities, interact to create specific challenges, particularly for women in leadership roles (Lazar, 2018; Hunt, 2018). The concepts of power and agency are also central to understanding women's experiences in leadership. Institutions can either support or limit women's empowerment and agency, especially in male-dominated environments (Coyle, 2003). CFT's relevance to this study lies in its ability to reveal how patriarchal and institutional obstacles affect women's access to educational leadership. The theory critiques restrictive power structures, supports pathways for reforming gender inequalities, and integrates inter-sectional insights, making it ideal for analysing complex gender dynamics in school leadership (Learning, 2021). With its emphasis on patriarchy, gen-der inequality, intersectionality, and power, CFT serves as a comprehensive foundation for

exploring gender inequities in educational leadership, aligning well with the study's objective of fostering equitable leadership structures in schools.

Gender Equality and Accountability

Gender equality represents a fundamental human right and a critical prerequisite for achieving sustainable development, necessitating robust accountability mechanisms to ensure progress and impact (Volodzkiene, 2025). This involves not only setting ambitious targets but also establishing clear frameworks for monitoring, reporting, and evaluating progress, alongside mechanisms for redress when commitments are not met (Erkinova, 2025). It is a feminist approach to accountability emphasizing on transparency and inclusivity, integrating diverse perspectives through voluntary self-reporting to gauge progress towards transformative results for women and girls (Colibăşanu, 2022). This approach extends to initiatives like the Generation Equality Action Coalitions and the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact, where signatories commit to mutual accountability for the agreed-upon outcomes (Colibăşanu, 2022).

The effectiveness of accountability strategies for sexual and reproductive health and rights is profoundly shaped by underlying power relations, which can either facilitate or impede the realization of human rights (Schaaf, et al., 2022). These power dynamics operate at various levels, from individual households to international negotiation forums, significantly influencing whether and how accountability mechanisms function effectively (Schaaf, et al., 2022). Understanding these intricate power structures is crucial, as they can lead to outcomes ranging from reinforcing existing inequalities to transformative changes (Sen et al., 2020).

Educational Leadership

Educational leadership may be described as a compound procedure that shapes the process of education in school as an institution (Mazurkiewicz, 2021). Dare and Saleem (2022) state that it creates the framework for teaching and learning quality and is also accountable for school development innovations. Principals, deputy principals, and depart-mental heads create the management structures that lead, initiate, and manage changes in school processes to create an effective learning environment (Nkosi, 2025). Sound educational leadership requires a culture of trust, collaboration, and shared decision-making, which can enhance positive outcomes (Nkosi, 2025). As our educational systems continue to advance, it is important to understand the complex intellectual structures of leadership roles for the sustainability of educational systems (Karakose et al., 2022). School leadership teams make shared decisions for school development and improvement (Jansen & Du Plessis, 2023).

They play a significant role in shaping education institutions in line with the school vision, to enhance learners 'success (Karatas et al., 2024). They also

promote a positive school culture through their handling of instructional and administrative matters at schools (Chen & Bos, 2023), and see to it that teachers undergo professional development, which can enhance educational outcomes (Foss et al.,2022). School leadership teams should nurture a strategic and collaborative style of management for the effectiveness of the school as an organization. Effective leadership is essential for clear school direction. Essentially, leaders bring order from chaos when it comes to organizational and individual problems. With a strong shared vision, a leadership team can foster excellence and innovation, cultivating a positive school culture that makes these qualities possible (Beauchamp et al., 2021). Leaders should model ethical behaviour, making decisions with integrity and guiding teachers and other stakeholders to enhance the teaching and learning experience (Webster & Litchka, 2020). Effective leaders possess a team spirit and the know-how to management properly and inclusively for the good of the entire institution. Historically, leadership in education was embedded in traditional hierarchical structures (Andrin et al., 2023), with women perceived as unqualified to exhibit the strategic thinking and assertiveness required of leaders (Phipps & Prieto, 2021). Thus, leadership was seen as a masculine domain (Louie, 2002). A few women held leadership positions, but for the most part, women were considered the household keepers, responsible for them

Gendered Educational leadership

Historically, "the normative view that men dominate in the domain of educational management and leadership or else as Bush (2015) claims 'management is a male pursuit' predominates; a fact that greatly impacts on women who aspire high managerial positions. Nowadays, it is quite evident that diversity in terms of gender becomes more noticeable with women to increasingly gain ground in these posts. However, as Sanchez & Thornton (2010) highlights that although lately the number of women in the superintendence has been doubled, it remains woefully small with countries where the school leadership is still identified with masculinity. The study particularly centres on women's role in the field of educational leadership according to upper secondary female school principals' views from Greece and Sweden "research study established that gender inequities in leadership positions are evident in many institutions and Schools are not exempt from these inequities. The research conducted a survey among selected Schools and randomly sample out the teaching staff. The study indicated that Male dominance in principal positions has created a female leadership minority in schools. In addition, women have had to overcome gender prejudices and limitations of access solely based on their gender. Stereotyped perceptions and expectations are placed on school leaders because of gender. School leaders may hold the same administrative positions; however, their paths to leadership and experiences within in it may differ dramatically because of gender."

From this study, the researcher notes that Bush (2010) took a general approach towards understanding gender in education leadership. The research did not significantly indicate or provide for solicitation of key challenges behind gender inequalities but rather just focuses on the extent of gender inequalities. Therefore, the researcher argues that this does not provide sufficient platform to establish lasting solution towards achieving gender equity in educational leadership. Coleman (2011) "interestingly argues that it is important not only to recognize the existing gendered differences in leadership styles but also to respect and place value on them. In addition, Coleman (2011) echoes the idea that women's different way of leading is often considered problematic, undermined and it should be subjected to change and adaptation to male patterns especially in non-Western societies with underlying patriarchal values and where no democratic frame is applied. Therefore the "national culture should be in congruence with the organizational culture because the former clearly influences the latter and determines the predominant and accepted leadership styles that should be adopted by the members of each organization (Qureshi, Zaman & Bhatti, 2011)."

Gender Representation in Public and Private Institutions

Research indicates notable disparities in gender representation in leadership roles between public and private universities. In Nigerian public universities, women hold only about 15-20% of senior leadership positions, such as vice-chancellor and dean (Ekine et al., 2013; Morley, 2014). In contrast, private universities demonstrate slightly better representation, benefiting from more progressive governance that prioritizes gender inclusivity (Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladokun, 2019). Similar trends are seen in countries like Kenya, where private institutions promote women more effectively (Sperandio and Kagoda, 2010). Despite these advances, both public and private universities worldwide struggle to achieve gender parity in top leadership roles (Morley, 2014). Both public and private institutions have made notable progress toward gender equity. The University of Ibadan, for instance, has increased female representation in senior leadership and established mentorship programs for female academics (Ekine et al., 2013). Similarly, Covenant University in Nigeria and Strathmore University in Kenya promote women in leadership through strategic mentorship and flexible work policies (Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladokun, 2019; Njeri, 2020). Despite these successes, challenges remain, such as institutional inertia in public universities and profit-driven priorities in private institutions, which hinder the consistent application of gender equity policies. Broader societal issues like gender stereotypes and work-life balance also disproportionately affect female academics.

Challenges of Gender Equality in Education Leadership

In recent years, the gender disparity has in recent years raised a global consciousness that unless something is done to empower women as an interest

group, global development will remain elusive. This is particularly true in today's economy, where capital is no longer the only decisive factor of production or competitive advantage, but also creativity and innovativeness. Commonwealth of Learning, (2011) observed that despite efforts to close the gender gap, large inequality still exists, especially in majority of developing countries. The global gender gap report 2012 revealed that Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) ranked the least region in closing the gender gap in educational attainment. The low ranking of SSA and Nigeria in gender parity educational attainment may have been strongly influenced by the African culture that is based on the age-long belief in male superiority and female subordination. Fetcher (2010) established that the largest body of research related to women has examined barriers to women in entering the leadership hierarchy or in moving up that hierarchy. These studies focus on a few challenges for women. Most of the studies on barriers are self-report surveys or interviews in which women identify the barriers they experienced either obtaining an administrative position or keeping it. "In addition, Avgeri (2015) in his research established that generally, the barriers to women were described as either internally imposed or externally imposed. These barriers include Working conditions and sexual discrimination, family and home responsibilities, poor self-Image or lack of confidence; inadequate preparation programs and finances for continuing training." Avgeri (2015) in a study on gender and educational leadership argue that women's failure to aspire to the superintendence might be a result of their experiences working with male superintendents, whose leadership behaviours may not be compatible with women's preferred ways of leading. The study adopted a desktop review methodology in which existing literature was synthesized to develop new information on the topic. The perceptions that women hold of what leaders do are largely based upon what they see administrators doing, rather than on imagining a different role. In addition, Fetcher (2010) found that the job stress of women was higher than that of men when working in a predominantly or traditionally male environment.

Bridging the Gender Gap through Policy

Notably, there has been a significant development in the inclusion of women and women's rights in key decisions in the education arena. The advent of the Maputo Protocol and other key Africa Union frameworks speak of the need to bridge the gender gap in education and other sectors as well as underpin the importance of including women in decision-making processes. These documents have set the right pace and environment for women to add their voices on Africa development matters (United Nations 2018). African governments have also developed policies that recognize roles of women in education systems. "These policies have given rise to affirmative action across all levels of education where women have been allocated more positions in different levels of learning institutions, and teenage mothers have been integrated back to school. There have also been

provisions on gender-friendly environment with some governments establishing laws and guidelines to prevent and mitigate school-related gender-based violence (Avgeri, 2015)." In addition, "several countries are implementing gender-responsive budgeting and reserving positions in their respective ministries of education and parliaments for women as in the case of Rwanda and Kenya. Women have also been appointed to head learning

Strategies for Enhancing Gender Equality through Leadership

Four key strategies for enhancing gender equity through leadership includes: policy development and implementation, mentorship and professional development programs, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and leadership training and awareness programs (Blackmore, 2017; Kram and Ragins, 2019; Morley, 2014).

a) Policy development and implementation

The development and implementation of gender equity policies are essential for advancing women into leadership roles within academic institutions. Effective recruitment strategies should actively encourage female candidates and minimize implicit biases, while transparent promotion processes and equitable career advancement opportunities are crucial for closing the gender gap (Blackmore, 2017). Retention policies that address work-life balance, such as flexible arrangements and childcare support, help retain women aspiring to leadership (Blackmore, 2017). However, the effectiveness of these policies relies on leadership commitment to enforcement, accountability, and measurable outcomes through structures like equity audits and diversity committees (Brown and Jones, 2020).

b) Mentorship and professional development programs

Mentorship is a crucial strategy for supporting women's career advancement in academia. Research indicates that women with access to mentors, especially those in senior leadership, are more likely to progress in their careers (Kram and Ragins, 2019). Mentors offer guidance, advocacy, and support, helping women navigate academic leadership challenges, build confidence, and expand their networks. Programs like "Women in Academic Leadership" provide women with mentors who offer insights and advice on overcoming gender-specific obstacles (O'Connor, 2020; Thomas et al., 2018). Professional development programs targeting women are vital for addressing gender disparities in higher education. Initiatives like the "HERS Leadership Institute" equip women with essential leadership skills, including negotiation and strategic planning (Bensimon et al., 2020). These programs create inclusive cultures that support female leaders and promote equitable institutional practices.

c) Diversity and inclusion initiatives

Diversity and inclusion initiatives are crucial for advancing gender equity by fostering an institutional culture that values contributions from all individuals,

regardless of gender. Effective programs address intersecting factors such as race and ethnicity, incorporating strategies like targeted recruitment for leadership roles, diversity awareness campaigns, and inclusive hiring practices that avoid gendered language. Such approaches enhance the diversity of applicants and create a more inclusive campus environment (Morley, 2014).Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, CEDAW serves as a global framework for eliminating gender-based discrimination and promoting women's rights across social, political, and economic spheres (United Nations, 1979). It obligates state parties to implement measures ensuring gender equality in education, employment, and decision-making. Several universities have successfully implemented diversity and inclusion programs to promote gender equity. The University of Cape Town's "Advancing Gender Equity in Academic Careers" initiative has effectively increased women's representation in senior academic roles through leadership development, mentorship, and family-friendly policies (Morley, 2021). Similarly, the University of Nairobi's "Women Leadership Academy" focuses on enhancing leadership skills among female faculty, resulting in a significant rise in women applying for and securing leadership positions within the university (Njeri, 2020).

d) **Leadership training and awareness programs**

Gender sensitivity training is crucial for leaders and administrators to comprehend the unique challenges women face in higher education and to formulate effective strategies to address them. These programs raise awareness of gender biases and discrimination, encouraging leaders to confront stereotypes that influence hiring, promotion, and policy enforcement decisions (Timmers, 2019). Through interactive workshops and discussions, training helps leaders reflect on their biases and fosters inclusive environments, ultimately creating leaders who are actively committed to promoting equity within their institutions (Sperandio, 2015). Unconscious bias training is vital for promoting gender equity by helping leaders recognize and address biases that affect decision-making processes. These biases can impact hiring, performance evaluations, and promotions, resulting in the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles (Carnes et al., 2015). Institutions like Stanford University and the University of Oxford have implemented such training for their leadership teams to cultivate a more inclusive culture, emphasizing reflective leadership that encourages questioning assumptions and promoting equity and inclusivity in their actions (O'Meara et al., 2017).Consequently, the Maputo Protocol – Officially known as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, this instrument was adopted by the African Union in 2003. It strengthens women's rights in Africa, addressing key issues such as political participation, economic empowerment, and freedom from discrimination (African Union, 2003). The protocol emphasizes the need for affirmation

Conclusion

As shown by this study and research, the selection process for a position of responsibility is a responsible but also laborious process. More so when this choice concerns the female presence in a leading position in education. Although most women, as the survey showed, are interested in gaining a leadership position, there is no equal presence to that of men. The patriarchal structures of Western societies have had a decisive influence on the prevalence of men in the administrative structures of all public and private sector organizations and, by extension, teachers. Besides, as the survey finds, women's perception is that society accepts male role models more. Despite the apparent effort to eliminate gender inequalities in the exercise of leadership in education, existing stereotypes prevent them from being treated equally (Aiston & Yang, 2017). According to the survey, women do not consider themselves inferior in qualifications compared to men, while they believe that today family and career can move forward in parallel. Around the world, choice for senior leadership positions differs for men and women (Gipson et al., 2017). For women, claiming a position in educational leadership is still fraught with obstacles and usually a man will be the one to promote them to this position (Mertz, 2009). The survey found that women find that they differ in their leadership skills from men. However, selection boards do not treat male and female leadership nominations so objectively, although the education system ensures gender parity. It is considered a natural consequence that the weak presence of women in the leading structures of the education system, e.g., secondary schools, obliges them to work more to satisfy the expectations of their superiors but also to be able to impose herself on her inferiors. The attempt to exclude women from leadership positions is expressed, according to research, by the trade union activity of feminist organizations.

Way Forward

As shown by both the literature review and the results of the survey, it is necessary to understand the reasons that led to the under-representation of women in leadership positions in secondary schools. In this way, it will be possible to guide stakeholders and persons to carry out the necessary practical interventions that will ensure the equal participation of both sexes with the sole criterion of competence in the exercise of leadership.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

GENDER FRIENDLY STRATEGIES: A PATHWAY TO INCLUSIVE SCIENTIFIC LITERACY

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Introduction

Leaders of the world of which Nigeria is a part at 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly (2015) as cited in Chiemeke (2017) adopted a set of goals termed sustainable development goals among which is to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote life-long learning. This is in realization of the place of education in ensuring the prosperity of the citizens which brings an end to poverty. Education is a human right that should be bestowed on every human being irrespective of gender, ability or disability. One of the ways of achieving this laudable objective of sustainable development is through science education. According to Anaekwe, Nzelum, Olisakwe and Okpala (2010) science education is a field of study that concerns itself with the transmission of scientific concepts, products, processes and attitudes to the learner. Science education in this 21st century seeks to advance the needed knowledge, skills and attitude for the generation of wealth in a sustainable manner. The relationship between education and development is well established such that education is a key index of development of any nation. This relationship was established in the National Policy on Education (2004) where it regards education as an instrument for national development. In the light of this, the National Policy on Education (2004) further emphasized that the goals of science education shall be to cultivate inquiry and rational mind for the conduct of a good life and provide knowledge and understanding of the complexity of the physical world.

What is Science?

In attempt to define science, scientists have adopted a number of approaches. To some, science is an organized body of knowledge. To others it is a way of searching for meanings or explanations of the events in nature or a way of investigating about events in nature. Science is also seen as the study of nature or as a systematic way of studying the universe (Okotcha, 2023). Science can be defined in terms of methods and processes i.e. (what scientist do) as well as its products (principles, facts, concepts, theories, laws) that make up the body of science. The process of science is defined by the scientific method, which is a logical and empirical approach used to investigate phenomena and establish new knowledge. The key elements of this methodology are:

- Objective Observation: Gathering data without bias. This often involves precise measurement and the use of specialized tools.
- Hypothesis Formulation: Creating a tentative, testable explanation for an observation.
- Experimentation and Testing: Designing controlled studies to gather evidence that either supports or refutes the hypothesis.
- Critical Analysis and Peer Review: Results are openly shared, scrutinized, repeated and verified by other scientists before being accepted as established knowledge.

This emphasis on empirical evidence, testability and self-correction is what distinguishes science from other forms of knowledge or belief. Science as a discipline or branch of human knowledge is characterized by certain features. These features or characteristics can be summarized as follows: science is objective and not subjective, science is dynamic and not static, it is specific, systematic and not haphazard and knowledge obtained through scientific investigation is verifiable.

No one definition of science can actually convey the full meaning of science. To this effect, in defining science one should consider the dual nature of science, that is, in terms of its process and product. Hence, science can be defined as a body of knowledge acquired through experimentation and investigation of events in nature. The study of science started with the early man. Right from time, man had tried to find out explanation to the things in his environment. This is because man by his nature is a curious being. Our forefathers practiced science in various ways like knowledge of the period that favours plant growth, the various food items to eat in order to get balanced diet, the drugs to apply in order to cure certain sicknesses and diseases. Science is dynamic and not static. That is why the content of science is constantly changing. New discoveries are constantly being made and these affect the views and opinions of members of the society. To this effect, what is science today may not be science tomorrow. Every new knowledge that has been discovered finds its root into education. That is why the curriculum is constantly changing to accommodate these new discoveries. For instance, the discovery or invention of computers has led to the introduction of computer education in schools and the application of computer in teaching and learning process.

How science is studied?

Science is studied through a number of procedures namely; observation, hypothesis, experimentation, data analysis (result), inference and conclusion. All these procedures are embedded in what we call the *scientific method*. The scientific method is a formalized and systematized approach employed by scientists in carrying out investigations (Nworgu 2006). It is sequential in application and involves the following steps: identification of a problem, definition of the problem in clear terms, formulation of appropriate hypothesis, collection of appropriate data to test the hypotheses, analysis of data collected to test the hypotheses and drawing necessary inference or conclusion based on the data.

Importance of Science

Advancing Quality of Life and Health: Science directly translates into improvements in the daily lives of people worldwide, primarily through breakthroughs in medicine and technology.

Healthcare and Longevity: Medical science (biology, chemistry) is responsible for vaccines, antibiotics, surgical techniques, and diagnostic tools (like MRI and CT scans). These advances have eradicated diseases like smallpox and significantly increased average human life expectancy.

Food Security: Agricultural sciences develop higher-yield crops, better pest management, and advanced irrigation techniques, such as drip systems, which are essential for feeding a rapidly growing global population in a sustainable manner.

Convenience and Efficiency: Nearly every modern convenience, from the clean water in your faucet to the internet and mobile devices, is a product of scientific research in physics, chemistry, and computer science

Driving Technology and Economic Growth: Science is the foundational wellspring for technology and innovation, which are the main drivers of a modern, knowledge-based economy.

Economic Competitiveness: Countries and economies that invest heavily in scientific research and development (R&D) typically lead in innovation, creating high-value jobs and maintaining global competitiveness.

Addressing Global Challenges: Scientific knowledge provides the necessary tools and understanding to tackle complex, large- scale problems that threaten human civilization and the environment.

Fostering Critical Thinking and Informed Decisions: Beyond its practical applications, science plays a vital role in society by cultivating a crucial way of thinking.

Problem-Solving Skills: The scientific method emphasizes logical reasoning, conclusions based on evidence and critical questioning skills that are useful in every aspect of life.

Science Education

Science education is the content approach to science teaching and learning. According to Humbe and Pember as cited in Olodu (2012), science education is a process of teaching or training especially in school to improve one's skill of systematic inquiry as well as natural attitudinal characteristic. Okotcha (2023) emphasized that science education is an integrated field of study which considers both the subject matter of science disciplines as well as the processes involved in the learning and teaching of science. One of the objectives of science education is the production of science literate citizens. If the populace is to be future creative citizens, they must be given a training that will ensure scientific literacy devoid of any form of misconception. Considering the indispensability of science to technological development, there is need for a better education in science since the lessons and skills science give can have such effects as producing more responsible citizens, building a strong economy, providing a healthier environment and better future.

Science Education's Objectives

The National Policy on Education (FRN 2004) lists the following as objectives for science education in Nigeria includes amongst others gaining knowledge and comprehension of a variety of concepts, principles, and laws via methodical study and experience of components of the body of knowledge known as science, acquiring a variety of cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor abilities and processes that lead to direct participation in science-related tasks, procedures, or applications in the lab or outdoors, making use of scientific principles and methods in the search for more information and a deeper understanding as well as the growth of the capacity to work independently in a field of study to address real-world issues and share that knowledge with others, acquiring a viewpoint or method of viewing the world, together with some comprehension of how it complements and diverges from other viewpoints or methods of organizing information and research and having a fundamental grasp of how science interacts with society and how it contributes to our cultural heritage;

From the aforementioned objectives, the teaching of science should be tailored in a way that these objectives of science education are achieved.

Inclusive Science Education

There is increasing emphasis on science and technology all over the world in general and Nigeria in particular. This emphasis is as a result of the impact of science and technology on the lives of individuals whether normal or abnormal. Hence, inclusive science education is an educational philosophy aimed at ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, disability, ability, identity, or prior experience, feel valued, supported, and capable of succeeding in science. The key principle of inclusive science education leading to mass scientific literacy is to ensure that the curriculum and learning activities are inherently flexible and accessible to all students. The teaching and learning environment is deliberately designed to achieve this using gender friendly instructional strategies.

Gender Friendly Strategies

Attainment of the sustainable development goal of creating inclusive education particularly science education requires the use of appropriate learning strategy where the learner is actively involved in the teaching-learning process. Many learner-centered learning strategies have been proposed such as concept mapping, computer assisted instruction, constructivist-based method, use of analogy, cooperative learning, focus group discussion and problem solving, team teaching among others (Okotcha, 2018). In these learner centered strategies students work together to search for understanding, meaning and solutions to a learning task. There is group heterogeneity, common group objectives, equal opportunities for success by group members, increased interpersonal skills and the promotion of interaction among group members. On the other hand, teacher – centered methods which are commonly used in schools entail a one way flow of communication from the teacher to the students. It is a teacher dominated approach or chalk and talk approach. Some of the learner-centered strategies include:

The learning Cycle (TLC): The learning cycle was first fully described by Karplus and Their (1967) for the science curriculum improvement study (SCIS). Their learning cycle approach was based on three phases of instruction: exploration, concept introduction and concept application. This is the model that described curriculum development and instruction as a 3-step cycle.

i. Exploration: It provides students with firsthand experiences to investigate science phenomena. In this step, students are given time to think, plan, investigate and organize collected information.
ii. Concept Introduction: This is the phase or stage where teachers try to promote equilibrium by introducing a new concept to account for phenomenon under study. It allows students to build science ideas through interaction with peers, texts and teachers.
iii. Concept Application: In this third step, students work on new problems that reconsider the concepts studied in the first two steps. Students at this stage should access their own learning. Students use the science ideas to solve new problems.

The five phase conceptual change model: This model was proposed by Buchward, Bybee, Heil, Kuerbis, Matsumoto and McNerney (1989). It incorporates the three core learning cycle phases while adding Engage and Evaluate to make a more complete cycle. The model constitutes the 5E's. Each phase begins with the letter 'E' and described a phase of learning. The 5E's are: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate.

Engagement: This phase is the problem identification stage. An 'engage' activity should do the following: make connections between past and present learning

experiences, anticipate activities and focus students thinking on the learning outcomes of current activities. Students should become mentally engaged in the concept, process or skill to be learned.

Exploration: This is the experimenting and problem solving stage. During this phase, students actively explore their environment or manipulate materials. The exploration phase of the teaching model provides students with a common basic experience within which current concepts, processes and skills are identified and developed. The aim of exploration activities is to establish experiences that teaches, and which students can use later to discuss concepts, processes or skills. The teacher initiates the activity and allows the students time and opportunity to investigate objects, materials and situations based on each students ' ideas of physical involvement in the activity, the students establish a relationship, observe patterns, identify variables and question events.

Explanation: This phase of the 5E's help students explain the concepts they have been exploring. This phase focuses students' attention, particular aspects of their engagement and exploration experiences. They have opportunities to verbalize their conceptual understanding or to demonstrate new skills or behaviours. This phase also provides opportunities for teachers to introduce formal terms, definitions and explanations for concepts, processes, skills or behaviours.

Elaboration: This phase is the generalization stage. It challenges and extends students conceptual understanding. Through new experiences, the learner develops deeper and broader understanding of major concepts, obtain more information about areas of interest and refine their skills.

Evaluation: Evaluation is the signal feedback stage. This phase encourages learners to assess their understanding and abilities and provides opportunities for teachers to evaluate students understanding of key concepts and progress towards achieving the educational objectives.

Okotcha, Eze and Ewuotu (2025) investigated the effect of 5E's model-based inquiry instructional technique on skill acquisition of pre-service integrated science teachers in Delta State. The result showed that there was no significant difference in the mean critical thinking skill acquisition scores of male and female pre-service teachers' when exposed to 5E's model-based inquiry instructional technique. This indicates that the strategy used was quite inclusive giving all the student equal learning environment to learn and think critically.

The four-phase Constructivist Model. This model was propounded by Bodzin, Cates and Price (2003). The phases are, eliciting students' pre-existing ideas, focusing on the target concepts (exploration), challenging students' ideas and applying newly constructed ideas to similar situations.

i. Eliciting students' pre-existing ideas. In this phase, the teacher tries to enhance students' motivation for the topic to become aware of their pre-existing knowledge.

ii. Focusing on the target Concepts/Exploration. The teacher here attempts to enrich the learning environment for students, engage them in activities and foster students thinking about the concept through asking questions.
iii. Challenging students' ideas. At this stage, students compare their prior knowledge with their newly structured one. The teacher makes reasonable explanations to confirm/disconfirm their gained experience.
iv. Applying newly Constructed ideas to similar situations. At this stage, the students apply their new structured knowledge to new situations to reinforce them.

The ED3U conceptual change model: This model was proposed by McComas (1995).

Step One: Explore. Student explore the phenomenon: in the form of a discrepant event, a visual display, a hands-on activity, an observation, or exposure to a variety of information source, print, video, film clips, internet sites. Object is to think toward proposing explanation of the phenomenon, selecting from a substrate of ideas.

Step Two: Diagnose. Evoke expression of students' personal conception; assess how students see alternative conception as plausible; select strategy that brings misconceptions to student awareness; guide student to search for more accurate explanations.

Step Three: Design. Students design personally-relevant tests of their ideas; create a context for a crucial experiment or prediction to test strength or weakness of a proposed explanation in both its explanatory and predictive value. The process of thinking out a personally-relevant test allows the students to explore the phenomenon in new ways.

Step four: Discuss. Students discuss the implications, if the results suggest the new conception is needed to replace a misconception, such alternative ideas are considered. Students may come up with their own ideas or their readiness may be open to exposure to a new theory presented by the teacher or other information source.

Step five: Use. Students apply new understanding; place the new conception in relation to other related knowledge; may also lead to a new cycle that further confirms or disconfirms the validity of the new conception.

The five step Conceptual Change instructional Model (PEDDA): This Model was Developed by Nworgu (1996) based on adaptations from Stoddarts and Stofflet (1994). The 5-step conceptual change instructional model PEDDA was derived from the initial letters of the processes involved. The processes are: Determination of Prior knowledge, Exploration of the phenomenon, Discussion of the experiment, Development of dissatisfaction with prior conception and Application.

Okotcha, Obielumani and Eze (2023) investigated the influence of gender on pre-service teachers' achievement in chemistry when taught using PEDDA instructional model. The findings of the study showed that there was no

statistical difference between the female pre-service teachers and their male counterparts. This means gender is not a significant factor in determining students' achievement in chemistry. Rather, the instructional strategy used gave all the students equal opportunity to learn. This result is also in line with the findings of Okotcha (2018). The author investigated the effect of a constructivist-based instructional model (PEDDA) on students' conceptual change in chemistry. The result revealed that there was no significant difference in the achievement of both males and females when taught using PEDDA instructional model. Thus, both male and female pre-service teachers benefited significantly from the strategy and this gave them equal opportunities which is in agreement to the sustainable development goals as regards inclusive education.

Conclusion

A corporative learning environment is necessary for a successful inclusive science education. The learning environment should be filled with hands-on and mind-on activities. There must be opportunities for discussion and students must feel safe in sharing their view points and the teacher must be adept in managing class groups and able to assume a facilitative role. Science is a dynamic process of seeking knowledge about nature through careful observation and experimentation leading to a systematic and organized body of knowledge. To acquire this body of knowledge, the teaching of science should be student-centered so that their interest can be aroused since science education is aimed at acquiring and developing conceptual and theoretical knowledge through scientific inquiring and problem solving (Chikwere & Njoku, 2011). The general state of science and technology calls for great concern because Nigeria cannot develop as rapidly as it aspires recognizing the fact that adequate instructional materials and equipment needed for acquisition of the necessary skills in science are lacking, hence forcing the teacher to use other methods of teaching that are teacher-centered neglecting the student-centered strategies.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:

1. The National Curriculum at all levels of education should incorporate inquiry-based instructional strategies such as PEDDA and 5E's in the teaching of science for inclusive science education.
2. The State and Local Government in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Education should endeavour to organize in-service training in form of workshops, seminars, conferences and symposia regularly for science teachers to enable them update their knowledge, attitudes and skills on the use of innovative teaching strategies.
3. School laboratories should be well equipped for inquiry- based learning.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

ADMINISTRATIVE POLITICS AND GENDER EQUITY PRACTICES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Gender equity in tertiary education remains a critical pillar for sustainable national development, social inclusion, and the consolidation of democratic governance. Universities and other higher education institutions serve not only as centres for knowledge production but also as spaces where leadership norms and power relations are reproduced. Although Nigeria has demonstrated formal commitment to gender equality through national instruments such as the National Gender Policy and international obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), entrenched gender disparities continue to shape access, participation, and leadership outcomes within tertiary institutions (Amaechi & Udochukwu, 2024; Igiebor, 2023; Morley, 2013).

Evidence from Nigerian scholarship indicates that women remain significantly underrepresented in senior administrative and decision-making positions, largely due to institutional politics, patriarchal organizational cultures, and informal power networks that privilege male dominance (Aina, 2006; Odejide, 2007). Administrative politics, manifested through recruitment practices, promotion processes, leadership selection, and policy implementation, often reinforces these inequalities by marginalizing gender-responsive reforms or reducing them to symbolic gestures. Consequently, gender equity policies are frequently weakened at the implementation stage, despite their presence in institutional frameworks.

This chapter critically examines the influence of administrative politics on gender equity practices in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It explores the structural and cultural barriers confronting women, the ways gender inequity is reproduced within administrative systems, and the implications for institutional effectiveness and national development. Furthermore, the chapter proposes strategies for strengthening gender mainstreaming through transparent governance, inclusive

leadership practices, and sustained institutional commitment to equity and accountability.

Explanation of Basic Concepts

Administrative Politics: Administrative politics describes the dynamic relationship between administrative mechanisms and political interests in the formulation and execution of public policies. It underscores the reality that public administration is not a value-free or purely technical enterprise; rather, it is embedded within power relations, ideological orientations, and competing interests that characterise political systems. In developing states such as Nigeria, public administrators often function within highly politicised environments where decisions on budgeting, appointments, promotions, and policy enforcement are frequently influenced by political calculations rather than objective administrative principles (Adamolekun, 2002; Adebayo, 2004; Olaopa, 2021).

Ake (1996) argues that administrative politics becomes particularly intense in contexts marked by weak institutional frameworks and fragile accountability mechanisms. Under such conditions, bureaucratic structures are susceptible to capture by dominant political elites, leading to the prioritisation of personal or group interests over collective welfare. This situation undermines administrative efficiency, transparency, and service delivery. Contemporary Nigerian scholars further note that persistent politicisation of the bureaucracy weakens professionalism and erodes public trust in government institutions (Ezeani, 2022; Ola & Tonwe, 2019). Consequently, administrative politics highlights the inextricable link between governance, power, and administrative decision-making, especially in transitional democracies.

Gender Equity Practices: Gender equity practices encompass intentional policies, institutional frameworks, and practical actions designed to ensure fairness in access to opportunities, resources, and outcomes for individuals of all genders. Unlike gender equality, which focuses on uniform treatment, gender equity acknowledges historically entrenched social and structural disadvantages and seeks to address them through compensatory and transformative measures (Aina, 2003; Ogbogu, 2020).

Within Nigeria's educational and organizational sectors, gender equity practices manifest through inclusive leadership structures, equitable access to education and employment, gender-responsive capacity-building programmes, and the dismantling of discriminatory cultural norms. Aina (2012) and Odejide (2007) emphasise that gender-sensitive institutional practices are central to women's empowerment and improved organizational effectiveness. Recent studies by Nigerian scholars reveal that organisations and educational institutions that mainstream gender equity tend to record higher staff morale, improved decision-making, and more sustainable governance outcomes (; Eboh, 2023; Ogbogu & Akinwale, 2021). Thus, gender equity practices are not merely social justice

initiatives but strategic instruments for institutional transformation and inclusive development.

National Development: National development is a comprehensive and multidimensional process that entails sustained improvements in a country's economic performance, political stability, social wellbeing, and institutional effectiveness, ultimately enhancing the quality of life of the populace. Beyond economic growth indicators, national development incorporates human capital development, social inclusion, equity, democratic governance, and institutional resilience (Ake, 1996).

Nigerian development scholars consistently link national development to the quality of leadership and the strength of public institutions. Obadan (2003) maintains that sustainable development depends on competent public administration, inclusive policymaking, and equitable resource allocation. Similarly, Ake (2001) conceptualises development as a people-centred process that prioritises poverty reduction, social justice, and the empowerment of marginalised groups. More recent contributions argue that transparent administrative systems and gender-responsive governance are critical enablers of national development in Nigeria, as they promote accountability, broaden participation, and optimise the use of human resources (Arowolo & Aluko, 2022; Olaopa, 2021). In this regard, administrative integrity and gender equity function as mutually reinforcing pillars for sustainable national development.

Theoretical Framework

The chapter adopted the Feminist Institutionalism theory projected by Fiona Mackay, Georgina Waylen, and Louise Chappell among others at different timelines; and Gender Mainstreaming Theory (GMT) propounded by Sylvia Walby, Jahan Rounaq, and Jacqui True at different timelines.

Feminist Institutionalism (FI)

Feminist Institutionalism is a theoretical approach that examines how formal and informal institutions are gendered and how power relations embedded within institutions sustain gender inequality. Emerging from feminist political science, FI challenges the assumption that institutions are neutral, arguing instead that they are structured around masculine norms, values, and practices (Mackay, et al., 2010).

The theory emphasizes that rules, norms, and routines, both written and unwritten, shape gendered outcomes in leadership, governance, and organizational life. Feminist institutionalists highlight how informal practices such as patronage, cultural expectations, and male-dominated networks often undermine formal gender-equality policies (Waylen, 2014). In African and Nigerian contexts, scholars note that patriarchal norms embedded in educational, political, and administrative institutions restrict women's access to leadership and decision-making roles (Aina, 1998; Mama, 2003).

Gender Mainstreaming Theory (GMT)

Gender Mainstreaming Theory advocates for the systematic integration of gender perspectives into all policies, programmes, and institutional processes to promote gender equality. The concept gained prominence following the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, which framed gender equality as a cross-cutting development issue rather than a sector-specific concern (Walby, 2005).

The theory asserts that gender inequality is structurally produced and therefore requires institution-wide responses, rather than isolated women-focused interventions. Gender mainstreaming seeks to ensure that the experiences, needs, and interests of both women and men are considered at all stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation (True & Mintrom, 2001). Nigerian scholars argue that effective gender mainstreaming in education and governance depends on political will, institutional capacity, and cultural sensitivity (Odejide, 2003; Okeke, 2012).

Gender Equity Policies and Their Implementation

In response to global and national advocacy for gender inclusion, many Nigerian universities have adopted gender equity policies and established gender-focused units or centres. However, evidence suggests that the presence of these frameworks has not translated into meaningful structural change. Igiebor (2023) observes that entrenched informal norms—often described as the "unwritten rules" of institutional politics—significantly limit the practical implementation of gender equity policies.

Similarly, Adeyemi and Salami (2024) argue that policy enactment is frequently undermined by resistance from dominant interest groups who perceive gender reforms as a threat to established power arrangements. As a result, gender policies often remain symbolic, lacking enforcement mechanisms, accountability structures, and leadership commitment. This disconnect between policy intent and practice highlights how administrative politics can neutralise reform efforts, thereby sustaining women's exclusion from influential academic and administrative positions.

Manifestations of Gender Inequity

Gender inequity is not a myth as far as educational institutions are concerned in Nigeria. At the lower educational institutions, the primary and the tertiary to be specific, there exist gender inequity with the male gender at the receiving end. At the tertiary level, it is the other way round. These manifest in many ways which include:

Leadership Representation: Gender inequity is most visibly reflected in leadership representation within Nigerian tertiary institutions. Women continue to be disproportionately excluded from senior administrative roles such as vice-

chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, provosts, and registrars, except in some colleges of education such as the Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Delta State, the deputy provosts were women from 2011 to 2019; and the provost, registrar, bursar, and the chief librarian, are women. Recent national analyses show that women occupy only a marginal percentage of vice-chancellor positions across Nigerian universities, underscoring a persistent leadership gender gap (Ogunode & Ibrahim, 2024; Taiwo, 2025).

These disparities cannot be attributed solely to a lack of qualifications or interest among women. Rather, they are sustained by institutional political practices that favour male-dominated networks, informal sponsorship, and succession patterns that exclude women from leadership pipelines. Consequently, gender inequity in leadership remains both a structural and political issue, requiring deliberate disruption of entrenched power relations alongside policy reform.

Barriers to Gender Equity in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

As parts of efforts to address gender equity demands in Nigeria, government at different times and leadership intentionally put in place policies to curb the entrenched gender inequity in the social institutions including education. Despite increasing policy attention to gender equality, the implementation of gender-equitable practices in Nigerian tertiary institutions remains constrained by multiple interrelated barriers. These obstacles are structural, cultural, and institutional in nature, limiting the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts across the higher education sector.

Low Gender Literacy and Awareness: A major constraint to gender equity is the limited understanding of gender concepts among key stakeholders, including institutional leaders, lecturers, and policymakers. Many administrators interpret gender equity narrowly or equate it with preferential treatment, rather than recognizing it as a strategy for fairness and inclusion. Hassan, et al. (2023) observe that inadequate gender literacy weakens institutional commitment to gender-responsive planning and leadership, thereby reducing the likelihood of sustained reform.

Cultural Biases and Patriarchal Ideologies: Deep-seated cultural beliefs continue to shape attitudes toward leadership and authority in Nigerian universities. Patriarchal norms often position men as natural leaders while associating women with supportive or subordinate roles. These cultural expectations influence recruitment, promotion, and leadership selection processes, creating invisible barriers to women's advancement in academic administration (Afolayan & Oyetade, 2022). As a result, gender disparities persist even where formal equality policies exist.

Weak Institutional Commitment and Policy Enforcement: Although many tertiary institutions have adopted gender-related policies, enforcement remains inconsistent. Limited political will, weak accountability mechanisms, and inadequate monitoring

structures undermine policy effectiveness. Ogunode and Abubakar (2024) argue that gender policies are often symbolic, lacking operational frameworks, funding, and leadership backing necessary for meaningful impact. This gap between policy formulation and practice continues to stall progress toward equity.

Political Interference and Governance Challenges: Political influence in institutional governance further complicates gender equity efforts. Appointments and promotions are sometimes shaped by patronage networks rather than merit, disproportionately disadvantaging women who are less represented in informal power structures. Educational planners and administrators must therefore navigate both internal resistance and external political pressures that constrain equitable decision-making (Yakubu & Mohammed, 2023).

Educational and Societal Norms Influencing Gender Inequality

Gendered Career Pathways and Stereotyping: Societal expectations frequently channel men and women into stereotypical academic and administrative roles. Women are more likely to be concentrated in teaching-focused or student-support positions, while men dominate strategic leadership and decision-making roles. This pattern reinforces vertical and horizontal segregation within tertiary institutions and mirrors broader gender inequalities in Nigerian society (Okeke & Nwafor, 2024).

Informal Networks and Exclusionary Practices: Informal professional networks play a significant role in career advancement within higher education. However, these networks are often male-dominated, limiting women's access to mentorship, sponsorship, and leadership opportunities. Such exclusionary practices perpetuate gender imbalance in senior academic and administrative positions and slow institutional progress toward inclusivity (Adeyemi & Salami, 2023).

Strategies for Promoting Gender Equity

To reduce the impact of administrative politics on gender equity in tertiary institutions, a combination of structural, capacity-driven, and participatory strategies is required. These strategies must move beyond symbolic commitments and focus on institutional transformation.

Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming should be fully institutionalised through enforceable policies, clear implementation frameworks, and measurable accountability mechanisms. Embedding gender considerations into budgeting, staffing, promotion, and governance processes can enhance institutional responsiveness and reduce political manipulation of equity initiatives. When leadership is held accountable for gender outcomes, equity becomes a core governance responsibility rather than a discretionary agenda (Amaechi & Udochukwu, 2024; Morley & Odejide, 2023).

Capacity Development: Building the capacity of administrators, governing council members, and policy implementers is critical for addressing deeply rooted gender biases. Regular training on gender sensitivity, power relations, and inclusive leadership can help decision-makers recognise subtle forms of discrimination

embedded in administrative practices. Capacity development also equips leaders to challenge patriarchal norms that often influence appointments, promotions, and access to strategic positions within institutions (Ogunyemi, et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2019).

Transparent Leadership Pathways: Establishing transparent, merit-based criteria for leadership selection and promotion can significantly reduce informal networks and political patronage that disadvantage women. Clear guidelines, open calls for leadership positions, and inclusive selection panels help minimise bias and foster trust in institutional processes. Transparency not only improves women's access to leadership roles but also strengthens institutional legitimacy and governance effectiveness (Adebayo & Yusuf, 2023; Northouse, 2022).

Gender Advocacy and Stakeholder Engagement: Sustained collaboration between universities, civil society organisations, staff unions, and gender advocacy groups is essential for promoting accountability and cultural change. External stakeholders can play a monitoring role by assessing policy implementation, documenting gender gaps, and advocating reforms where resistance exists. Such partnerships help counterbalance administrative politics and ensure that gender equity initiatives are not undermined by internal power struggles (Morley, 2013; Okeke & Nwafor, 2024;)

Conclusion

Administrative politics within Nigerian tertiary institutions significantly shapes the implementation and outcomes of gender equity practices. Although formal gender equity policies provide an important foundation, their impact is often weakened by informal power structures, patronage systems, and entrenched socio-cultural norms. Advancing meaningful gender equity therefore requires more than policy formulation; it demands sustained political will, institutional accountability, capacity building, and deliberate efforts to transform organizational culture. Only through comprehensive administrative reform and inclusive leadership practices can higher education institutions achieve lasting gender equity.

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CHAPTER NINE

INCLUSIVE ADULT EDUCATION FOR MARGINALIZED WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Inclusive adult education has become a critical instrument for advancing gender equality, social justice, and sustainable development in Nigeria. Although national and global initiatives continue to promote universal education and lifelong learning, many Nigerian women and girls—particularly those from marginalized communities remain excluded from meaningful educational opportunities. Structural inequalities rooted in poverty, rural isolation, entrenched gender norms, early marriage, caregiving burdens, conflict, and limited access to digital technologies continue to restrict their participation in adult learning programmes (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2019, 2022, 2024, 2025).

For many women and girls who were denied formal schooling or forced to discontinue their education due to socio-economic pressures, adult education represents a second chance and, often, the only viable pathway to empowerment. When intentionally designed to be inclusive, adult education can provide literacy, vocational competencies, digital skills, and critical awareness necessary for economic independence, civic participation, and informed decision-making. Inclusivity in this context extends beyond access; it requires flexibility, cultural responsiveness, affordability, and programme structures that accommodate women's lived realities.

Despite measurable progress in women's educational participation, persistent disparities remain among the most disadvantaged groups in Nigeria. Addressing these inequities demands gender-responsive policies, targeted interventions, reliable disaggregated data, and community-based strategies that directly confront the systemic barriers limiting women's engagement in lifelong learning (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2024).

This chapter therefore explores the conceptual and theoretical foundations of inclusive adult education, analyzes the socio-cultural and structural barriers confronting marginalized women and girls in Nigeria, and proposes strategic frameworks for designing responsive programmes that promote equitable and transformative lifelong learning outcomes.

Inclusive Adult Education in the Nigerian Context

Nigeria offers a critical context for examining inclusive adult education, given its vast population, deep socio-cultural diversity, and entrenched gender disparities in schooling. National literacy statistics consistently show that women make up the majority of the adult non-literate population. Reports indicate that more than 60% of Nigeria's adult illiterate population are women, particularly in rural communities and the northern geopolitical zones National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC, 2018). This imbalance stems from historical barriers to girls' education, early school dropout, and restricted access to continuing learning opportunities.

Exclusion from adult education in Nigeria is strongly associated with poverty, patriarchal traditions, early marriage, insecurity, and regional inequality. Women living in internally displaced persons camps, nomadic settlements, riverine communities, and informal urban areas experience layered disadvantages due to fragile infrastructure and limited state outreach. The uneven distribution of adult education centres—especially the shortage of functional literacy centres and trained facilitators in rural areas—further widens the gap.

Although national frameworks such as the National Policy on Education and programmes coordinated by NMEC exist, implementation remains weak. Many initiatives suffer from inadequate funding, poor monitoring, and limited gender responsiveness. As a result, marginalized women continue to be underserved, constraining the transformative impact adult education could have on inclusive national development.

Conceptualizing Inclusive Adult Education and Marginalization

Inclusive adult education refers to learning opportunities that are accessible and equitable for all adults, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, or geographical location. It is grounded in the belief that every individual has the right to education throughout life and that removing barriers to learning enhances personal development, economic participation, and social inclusion (UIL, 2025). Marginalized women and girls are those who experience systematic exclusion from social, economic, and educational opportunities due to overlapping disadvantages such as poverty, disability, ethnic minority status, and cultural gender norms (International Journal of Adult Learning and Continuing Education, 2025).

From a gender perspective, marginalization in adult education often reflects deeply entrenched social norms that devalue women's learning and prioritize male education. These norms are compounded by structural inequalities such as limited access to childcare, time constraints from unpaid care work, and lack of transportation in rural areas. Addressing these issues requires holistic approaches that extend beyond formal instruction to include supportive services, community engagement, and social protection mechanisms.

Profile of Marginalized Women and Girls in Nigeria

Marginalized women and girls in Nigeria constitute diverse groups, including rural women, women living in urban slums, women with disabilities, out-of-school girls, young mothers, internally displaced persons, and women affected by conflict. Many of these women have limited formal education and face compounded barriers to learning.

National statistics indicate that Nigeria's adult literacy rate remains uneven, with female literacy significantly lower than male literacy. In several northern states, female adult literacy rates fall below 40%, reflecting deep-rooted gender and regional disparities (National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education [NMEC], 2018). Poverty, early marriage, and insecurity further exacerbate women's exclusion from adult education.

Marginalization and the Quest for Educational Gender Equity

Marginalization refers to entrenched social dynamics that restrict certain groups from accessing vital opportunities and resources. In Nigeria, women and girls frequently encounter overlapping forms of exclusion—ranging from gender bias and poverty to restrictive cultural norms. These compounded disadvantages reduce their access to, and sustained participation in, adult education programmes. Addressing these structural barriers is central to advancing educational gender equity and ensuring that adult learning becomes genuinely inclusive.

Policy and Legal Framework for Women's Adult Education in Nigeria

Nigeria's educational framework formally acknowledges adult and non-formal education as critical to lifelong learning and national development. The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education is mandated to coordinate literacy initiatives nationwide, while the National Gender Policy underscores education as a pathway to women's empowerment and social inclusion.

At the global level, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning supports governments in strengthening gender equality within adult learning systems through research, policy guidance, and capacity development. Similarly, the Global Alliance for Literacy prioritizes closing literacy gaps among women and girls, particularly in contexts shaped by poverty and rural disadvantage.

However, despite these policy commitments, progress toward gender equity in adult education remains constrained. Persistent challenges—including inadequate funding, weak inter-agency coordination, and limited gender-responsive planning—continue to widen the gap between policy aspirations and practical outcomes across states and local governments.

Strategies for Promoting Inclusive Adult Education

Promoting inclusive adult education for marginalized women and girls requires deliberate and context-specific strategies. Community-based learning programmes reduce distance and cultural barriers, while flexible schedules accommodate women's domestic and economic responsibilities. Functional literacy programmes that integrate vocational and entrepreneurial skills enhance relevance and economic empowerment. The use of local languages, gender-sensitive learning environments, and community sensitization campaigns further improve participation and retention. Engaging traditional and religious leaders is particularly important in addressing cultural resistance to women's education.

Role of Technology in Inclusive Education

Technology has emerged as a powerful driver of inclusion in modern education, transforming how learning is accessed, delivered, and evaluated. Within inclusive education systems, technology helps dismantle barriers to participation, fosters equity, and supports learners with diverse abilities and backgrounds. True digital inclusion extends beyond device availability to encompass affordability, reliable connectivity, digital literacy, accessible content, and enabling policies that ensure meaningful engagement for all learners.

Expanding Access and Participation

Educational technologies broaden learning opportunities by addressing geographical, physical, and socio-economic constraints. Online platforms, mobile applications, and open educational resources provide flexible pathways for learners who may be excluded from traditional schooling. For rural communities, adult learners, and learners with disabilities, technology creates adaptable learning environments that align with varied life circumstances and learning contexts (Selwyn, 2020; Trucano, 2021). When strategically implemented, digital tools enhance enrollment, retention, and opportunities for lifelong learning.

Supporting Learners with Disabilities

Assistive and adaptive technologies are fundamental to inclusive education. Innovations such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, captioning systems, audio materials, and alternative input devices promote accessibility and learner independence. Guided by Universal Design for Learning (UDL), technology enables multiple forms of representation, engagement, and expression, ensuring that educational environments accommodate learner diversity rather than impose uniform standards (Al-Azawei et al., 2020; Rao et al., 2021).

Enhancing Teaching and Learning Practices

Technology empowers educators to implement differentiated instruction, personalized learning, and continuous assessment. Digital platforms allow teachers to tailor content to learners' pace, preferences, and abilities while using data

insights to monitor progress. In inclusive classrooms, technology facilitates collaboration, interaction, and multimodal instruction. However, its effectiveness depends significantly on teachers' digital competence and thoughtful pedagogical integration (Koehler et al., 2020; Redecker, 2022).

Bridging Educational Inequalities through Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion functions as both an educational equity and social justice strategy. Persistent disparities in connectivity, device access, and digital skills—especially in low-income and rural communities—risk deepening existing inequalities. Policies that promote affordable internet access, community digital hubs, and inclusive digital curricula are essential to prevent technology from reinforcing exclusion (Van Dijk, 2020; Robinson et al., 2022).

Technology in Adult and Lifelong Learning

For adult learners, technology provides flexible and self-directed learning opportunities compatible with work and family responsibilities. Approaches such as mobile learning, blended models, and radio–digital integration have demonstrated effectiveness in adult literacy and continuing education. By strengthening functional digital skills, inclusive technology initiatives enhance adults' economic participation, civic engagement, and social inclusion, thereby supporting sustainable development goals (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2020; Boeren, 2021).

Stakeholders in Inclusive Adult Education

Inclusive adult education thrives on coordinated action among diverse stakeholders. Government agencies shape policies and allocate funding, while non-governmental and community-based organizations implement programmes at the grassroots level. Traditional and religious leaders play a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes toward women's education, and international development partners provide financial assistance and technical expertise. Sustained partnership among these actors strengthens programme outreach, improves effectiveness, and enhances long-term sustainability.

Rationale for Inclusive Adult Education for Marginalized Women and Girls

Inclusive adult education delivers multidimensional benefits, including:

Economic Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: Inclusive adult education provides women with functional literacy, vocational skills, and entrepreneurial knowledge that expand income-generating opportunities. Educated women are more likely to participate in productive economic activities, support household income, and reduce economic dependency. Research indicates that women's education produces multiplier effects that enhance family welfare and promote community development (World Bank, 2022).

Health and Well-Being: Adult education enhances women's health literacy by improving knowledge of nutrition, reproductive health, disease prevention, and family planning. With access to education, marginalized women are better equipped to make informed health decisions for themselves and their families. This is particularly significant in Nigeria, where maternal mortality and preventable diseases remain prevalent in underserved communities (WHO, 2021).

Social Inclusion and Civic Participation: Inclusive adult education strengthens women's self-confidence, agency, and participation in civic and democratic processes. Literacy and civic knowledge enable women to understand their rights, engage governance structures, and confront discriminatory norms. This promotes social cohesion and inclusive governance at both local and national levels.

Intergenerational Benefits: Educated mothers are more likely to prioritize and support their children's education, especially that of girls. Inclusive adult education therefore generates long-term intergenerational gains, helping to disrupt cycles of educational exclusion and gender inequality in Nigerian society (UNESCO, 2019).

Challenges of Inclusive Adult Education for Marginalized Women and Girls in Nigeria

Although inclusive adult education is increasingly recognized as essential for gender equality and sustainable development, its implementation in Nigeria remains constrained by structural, socio-cultural, economic, and institutional challenges. These barriers significantly affect access, retention, and learning outcomes for marginalized women and girls.

Inadequate Funding and Weak Policy Implementation: Persistent underfunding continues to undermine adult and non-formal education. Compared to the formal sector, budget allocations are minimal, leading to poorly resourced centres, insufficient instructional materials, and irregular programme delivery. While enabling policies exist, weak enforcement, limited accountability, and fragmented coordination hinder meaningful impact. As a result, inclusive education targets for marginalized women and girls remain largely unmet (Aderinoye, 2010; UNESCO, 2020).

Socio-Cultural and Religious Barriers: Deeply rooted cultural norms and religious beliefs often restrict women's participation, particularly in rural and conservative communities. Early marriage, rigid gender expectations, and the prioritization of domestic roles diminish the perceived value of female education. In some settings, women require approval from spouses or family members before enrolling, further limiting consistent participation (UNICEF, 2021).

Poverty and Economic Constraints: Economic hardship remains a major barrier. Many marginalized women are engaged in subsistence farming, petty trading, or informal work, leaving little time for structured learning. Indirect costs such as transportation, learning materials, and forgone income discourage enrolment. Without financial assistance or programmes integrated with livelihood support, dropout rates remain high among low-income women (World Bank, 2022).

Insecurity and Conflict: Insecurity—including insurgency, banditry, and communal violence—has disrupted adult education activities in several regions, especially in the North-East and parts of the North-West. Learning facilities have been destroyed or abandoned, and fear of violence deters attendance. Displacement in conflict-affected areas further complicates access and continuity (UNESCO, 2019).

Inadequate Infrastructure and Learning Facilities: Many adult education centres operate in unsuitable environments such as borrowed classrooms, religious buildings, or open spaces. These facilities frequently lack essential amenities including seating, lighting, sanitation, and secure spaces—conditions that disproportionately affect female learners. The absence of childcare services further discourages participation among women with young children.

Shortage of Qualified and Gender-Sensitive Facilitators

Inclusive adult education requires trained facilitators who understand adult learning principles and gender-responsive approaches. However, Nigeria faces a shortage of qualified adult educators, particularly female facilitators who can serve as role models. Limited training in inclusive pedagogy reduces responsiveness to the diverse needs of marginalized women and girls (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2020).

Inflexible Curriculum and Learning Schedules: Rigid curricula and fixed timetables often fail to accommodate women's lived realities. Domestic responsibilities, caregiving duties, and informal employment make attendance at conventional hours difficult. Additionally, curricula lacking contextual relevance or practical livelihood components weaken motivation and increase dropout rates.

Limited Awareness and Community Support: Low awareness of the benefits of adult education contributes to weak enrolment. In many communities, adult education is perceived as inferior to formal schooling or merely remedial. Limited advocacy and stakeholder engagement further undermine programme legitimacy and long-term sustainability.

Digital Divide and Limited Access to Technology: As digital competence becomes central to socio-economic participation, limited access to devices, internet connectivity, and digital skills presents a growing challenge. Marginalized women and girls are disproportionately excluded from blended and online learning opportunities (World Bank, 2021).

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Limitations: Effective planning requires reliable data on enrolment, retention, learning outcomes, and gender disparities. However, weak monitoring and evaluation systems constrain evidence-based decision-making. The absence of disaggregated data on marginalized women and girls limits impact assessment and targeted intervention design.

Strategies for Inclusive Adult Education

Promoting inclusive adult education for marginalized women in Nigeria requires context-sensitive approaches that address the why, what, and how within Nigeria's socio-cultural realities.

1. Gender-Responsive Policy Design

Adult learning policies should be grounded in gender analysis and supported by sex-disaggregated data to address women-specific barriers (UNESCO, 2024). Key measures include flexible scheduling, safe learning environments, and financial support for transportation and childcare.

2. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Active engagement of community leaders, families, and local organizations is essential for reshaping social norms and encouraging women's participation. Community ownership strengthens legitimacy and sustainability.

3. Flexible Delivery Modes

Multiple delivery options can accommodate women's time constraints. These include evening and weekend classes, decentralized community-based learning centres, mobile education units serving remote areas, blended approaches such as radio instruction, mobile-phone learning (SMS, WhatsApp, voice notes), and community learning circles. Such flexibility acknowledges women's responsibilities in childcare, farming, and informal trade.

4. Digital Literacy and Skills Training

Targeted digital literacy programmes can bridge the digital divide and expand women's access to learning resources, employment opportunities, and economic participation (UNESCO Digital Skills Project, 2025).

Conclusion

Inclusive adult education remains a powerful tool for empowering marginalized women and girls in Nigeria. By addressing structural, socio-cultural, and economic barriers, adult education can advance gender equity, social inclusion, and sustainable development. Achieving these outcomes demands adequate funding, gender-responsive policies, community engagement, and innovative delivery models.

More than an educational intervention, inclusive adult education represents a transformative pathway toward social justice and national development. Placing women's lived experiences at the centre of programme design will enable education systems to foster equitable and meaningful opportunities for all.

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CHAPTER TEN

GENDER AND ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP IN SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA: A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Sustainable resource management continues to pose significant challenges in Nigeria, particularly amid rapid population expansion, urban growth, climate variability, and mounting pressure on land, water, and forest resources. Across various regions of the country, environmental concerns such as deforestation, declining soil fertility, water shortages, and pollution threaten livelihoods and long-term socio-economic development. Although numerous policies and technological interventions have been introduced to address these issues, environmental degradation remains widespread. This persistence indicates that structural and socio-cultural dimensions—especially leadership dynamics—require deeper examination.

Within this context, gender emerges as a critical yet insufficiently explored dimension of environmental leadership. In many Nigerian communities, women are central to everyday natural resource management through activities such as subsistence agriculture, water sourcing, fuelwood collection, and household waste disposal. Despite their extensive engagement with environmental resources, women are often marginalized from formal leadership structures and decision-making platforms that govern environmental planning and resource allocation. This imbalance between active participation and limited authority raises important questions about equity, efficiency, and the long-term sustainability of resource governance systems.

Importantly, patterns of gendered environmental leadership are not uniform across Nigeria. They are shaped by geographical location, cultural norms, ecological conditions, and socio-economic contexts. Nigeria's diverse ecological zones—from the semi-arid Sahelian belt in the north to the rainforest and coastal regions in the south—present distinct environmental pressures and management practices. These spatial variations influence access to resources, leadership opportunities, and participation in environmental governance for both men and women. A geographical

perspective is therefore essential for understanding how gender roles intersect with environmental leadership across different spatial settings.

Evidence from other African contexts suggests that inclusive leadership frameworks that integrate both male and female perspectives can strengthen resource management outcomes and enhance community resilience. However, in Nigeria, empirical research that explicitly connects gender, leadership, and geography in environmental management remains limited, particularly at community and local scales. Much of the existing literature addresses gender and development or environmental sustainability separately, without sufficiently linking leadership dynamics to spatial variations in resource governance.

Against this backdrop, this study investigates the relationship between gender and environmental leadership in sustainable resource management in Nigeria through a geographical lens. By examining how gender shapes leadership roles and environmental decision-making across diverse ecological and cultural landscapes, the study aims to generate insights that support more inclusive, context-sensitive, and sustainable resource management strategies. The findings are expected to enrich scholarly discourse and inform policymakers, planners, and development practitioners committed to advancing environmental sustainability in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications and Theoretical Lens

Any serious engagement with gender and environmental issues must begin by interrogating the fluidity of its key concepts. In Nigeria, gender cannot be treated as a fixed or externally imposed category; rather, it functions as a socially constructed and evolving framework shaped by ethnicity, religion, and locality. As Okali (2019) notes, gender reflects the dynamic roles, responsibilities, and privileges assigned on the basis of socially perceived identities. It extends beyond biological distinctions to define who participates in decisions about land, whose agricultural knowledge is legitimized, and who controls inheritance rights. Importantly, these patterns vary significantly across contexts—what operates within a Hausa-Fulani household may differ markedly from practices in an Igbo community. Such contextual variation demands a grounded and inclusive understanding of environmental leadership.

Environmental leadership, therefore, should not be limited to high-level policymakers drafting national climate frameworks. In resource governance, leadership emerges wherever individuals influence how communities interact with their environment. It encompasses the capacity to mobilize collective action toward shared ecological goals. This may be seen in a woman coordinating community efforts to maintain a communal well, or in the head of a fish-smoking cooperative who restricts the purchase of juvenile fish to protect local stocks, as observed by Adewumi and Adesina (2021). It is also reflected in the authority of elders whose ecological knowledge shapes conservation practices. Leadership, in this sense, is

embedded in everyday practices that regulate access to and stewardship of natural resources.

Likewise, sustainable resource management—often simplified in policy discourse—entails complex negotiations among competing interests, needs, and temporal priorities. To unpack these tensions, a Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) perspective is essential. Advanced by scholars such as Dianne Rocheleau and colleagues (2019), FPE emphasizes that ecological processes are inseparable from structures of social power and inequality. It challenges us to ask: sustainability for whom, and at whose expense? Within this framework, landscapes are not neutral spaces but arenas where gender, class, and ethnic relations are materially and symbolically inscribed.

Gender and Environmental Leadership in Nigeria

An examination of Nigeria's formal environmental governance reveals a consistent gender imbalance. Key leadership positions—such as Minister of Environment and heads of regulatory agencies including NESREA and NOSDRA—have overwhelmingly been occupied by men. This pattern reflects a structural "leaky pipeline." Although female enrolment in tertiary education has improved, women remain underrepresented in technical disciplines—environmental engineering, geology, forestry—that typically feed into these leadership roles. Persistent stereotypes, exclusionary academic and field cultures, and limited mentorship opportunities continue to constrain women's progression (Akinbami & Olawoye, 2020). Consequently, gender disparities are embedded long before formal appointments are made.

The consequences are substantive. When women's everyday environmental experiences are marginalised in policy processes, governance frameworks risk being technically efficient yet socially detached. For instance, an agricultural policy promoting high-yield maize may succeed statistically but fail locally if it disregards women's preferences for traditional varieties valued for storage and culinary suitability. In such cases, policy is scientifically sound but socially incomplete.

However, focusing solely on women's exclusion from formal institutions obscures a critical reality. At the grassroots—on farms, in forests, and along riverbanks—women function as primary environmental managers. Their leadership operates through daily practice rather than official titles. They monitor water quality, manage seasonal resource flows, and conserve biodiversity through indigenous seed preservation (Okeke, et al., 2020). This represents a sophisticated, place-based knowledge system grounded in sustained observation—often more immediate than formal monitoring systems.Yet structural constraints remain intertwined. Socio-cultural norms frequently equate public authority with masculinity, limiting women's direct participation in community decision-making forums (Abdu & Abdul, 2021). Legal-economic barriers further complicate this landscape. Customary land tenure systems largely favour male inheritance, leaving

many women with insecure, usufruct access to land. Without secure title, incentives for long-term environmental investment are weakened, and women's recognition as legitimate stakeholders in development projects is diminished (Ajala, 2019). Additionally, the gap between national gender policies and local implementation persists, with "gender mainstreaming" often reduced to symbolic inclusion without budgetary or accountability mechanisms (Ezugwu & Uche, 2021).

Geographical Dimensions of Gendered Environmental Leadership

Across Nigeria, women's environmental leadership assumes distinct regional forms shaped by ecology, livelihood systems, and cultural institutions. In the Niger Delta, women have historically mobilised collective protest, such as the 1984 Egberu blockade and the 2002 Ogharefe occupation, framing environmental degradation as an existential threat to community survival (Obi & Ojakorotu, 2020). Their authority often derives from socially recognised identities as mothers and custodians of community welfare. However, as environmental crises transition from protest to technical remediation and compensation processes, male-dominated structures frequently reclaim decision-making power, marginalising women's influence.

In the Sahelian North, particularly in states such as Sokoto and Katsina, women's leadership emerges within the constraints of ecological stress and sociocultural norms, including purdah. Though largely exercised within domestic and informal spaces, their authority over water management, grain preservation, and small livestock is significant. Through savings associations (adashi), women mobilise collective resources for adaptive strategies such as irrigation tools and drought-resistant crops (Ibrahim & Umar, 2022). This leadership is understated yet strategic, strengthening household resilience amid climatic uncertainty.

In the Middle Belt and South-East, especially within Igbo communities, institutions such as the Umuada provide culturally sanctioned platforms for collective female governance. Historically, these groups have upheld environmental norms, including the protection of sacred groves, erosion control, and seed preservation (Nzegwu, 2019). Their legitimacy rests not on formal office but on ancestry, spirituality, and communal continuity, linking ecological stewardship to cultural identity.

In coastal and aquatic zones—from Lagos to Bayelsa—gendered divisions of labour structure environmental authority. While men dominate fishing, women control processing and marketing. Through trader associations, they regulate supply by rejecting undersized fish and enforcing seasonal restrictions in markets (Adelekan & Asiyanbi, 2020). Here, economic leverage functions as an informal yet effective mechanism of environmental governance.

Taken together, these regional variations demonstrate that women's environmental leadership is deeply contextual. Effective environmental policy must therefore move beyond generic gender inclusion frameworks and adopt place-

sensitive approaches that recognise and strengthen the diverse forms of authority women already exercise.

Implications for Sustainable Resource Management

Recognising this geographically diverse landscape of women's environmental agency has clear practical benefits for sustainability outcomes.

First, it strengthens the knowledge base for decision-making. While formal environmental management depends on technical data, women's situated knowledge provides critical, ground-level insights. Observations about changes in soil quality, fish morphology, or crop performance serve as valuable bio-indicators. Conservation initiatives that incorporate such experiential knowledge demonstrate higher levels of local ownership and long-term success (Onyekuru & Ihemezie, 2021).

Second, it enhances implementation and compliance. Environmental policies are effective only when adopted in practice. As primary household resource managers, women play a central role in translating rules into daily action. Projects that ignore women's lived realities—such as clean cookstove interventions misaligned with cooking practices—often fail (Bello & Ahmed, 2022). Conversely, policies co-designed with women are more likely to foster sustained stewardship.

Third, it expands sustainability beyond resource productivity to social resilience. Women's strategies frequently prioritise risk diversification, informal credit systems (esusu, adashi), and livelihood diversification (Mba, 2021). When women participate meaningfully in governance, environmental management is more likely to incorporate intergenerational equity and adaptive capacity, strengthening the broader socio-ecological system.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This analysis affirms that women in Nigeria are not passive recipients of environmental policy but active, place-based leaders. The principal challenge lies not in the absence of leadership but in the systemic failure to integrate it into formal governance structures. A geographically informed policy framework suggests several actionable steps:

1. **Move beyond National Quotas:** Gender quotas at national levels should be complemented by guaranteed representation of women in local resource management bodies, drawing from existing place-based institutions such as market associations, Umuada groups, and water-user associations.
2. **Adopt Geographically Tailored Support:** National programmes must be adapted to regional contexts—legal and technical empowerment for women's monitoring groups in the Niger Delta; direct climate-resilience funding for women's savings groups in the Sahel; and institutional support for culturally rooted environmental governance bodies in the South-East.

3. **Secure Resource Rights:** Reforming land and resource tenure systems to guarantee women independent and secure rights is foundational—not merely for equity, but for sustainable stewardship.
4. **Institutionalise Knowledge Interfaces:** Formal mechanisms such as Environmental Impact Assessments should require structured consultation with women's resource-user groups, ensuring their experiential knowledge informs planning and implementation.
5. **Integrate Gender Geography into Education:** Teacher education and professional training institutions should incorporate place-based case studies on gender and environment, cultivating professionals who understand sustainability as socially embedded and locally grounded.

Ultimately, sustainable resource management in Nigeria requires recognising the geography of everyday authority. Rather than treating the environment as a distant administrative concern, governance must acknowledge the lived landscapes shaped by gendered knowledge, labour, and care. By aligning formal institutions with these embedded forms of leadership, Nigeria can advance a more resilient, inclusive, and contextually grounded sustainability model.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

GENDER EQUITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ART EDUCATION LEADERSHIP: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

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Introduction

Gender equity in education has emerged as a central concern within contemporary debates on social justice, institutional governance, and inclusive development. Although global and national policies have consistently advocated equal participation across genders, disparities remain deeply entrenched—particularly in leadership and decision-making positions. Educational leadership structures often reproduce long-standing hierarchies that privilege dominant groups, thereby limiting equitable access to authority and influence. These inequities extend beyond representation; they shape institutional cultures, policy priorities, and the distribution of opportunities. As such, gender equity in leadership is increasingly recognised as fundamental to ethical governance, institutional accountability, and sustainable educational reform.

Within art education, these concerns acquire distinctive significance. As a field grounded in creativity, identity formation, cultural dialogue, and critical reflection, art education is uniquely positioned to model inclusive and transformative leadership practices. Yet, paradoxically, leadership structures within art education frequently mirror broader systemic inequalities. Women and gender-diverse professionals remain disproportionately underrepresented in senior and strategic roles, often confronting structural barriers such as implicit bias, restricted access to leadership networks, and uneven mentorship opportunities. This contradiction between the field's equity-oriented philosophy and its leadership realities raises important questions about institutional responsibility and reform.

Research in educational leadership suggests that gender-diverse leadership enhances organizational effectiveness by broadening perspectives, strengthening decision-making processes, and cultivating inclusive professional climates (Laki & Badon, 2024). However, representation alone does not guarantee transformation. Without deliberate accountability frameworks, equity commitments risk remaining

rhetorical rather than operational. Accountability mechanisms—such as transparent recruitment processes, equity audits, leadership monitoring systems, and institutional reporting structures—are essential to ensuring that gender equity is systematically embedded in policy and practice.

This chapter therefore interrogates the interplay between gender equity and accountability in art education leadership. It critically examines how leadership structures either sustain or challenge gendered power relations and explores institutional practices capable of advancing substantive, measurable, and enduring equity within contemporary art education context

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical basis for advancing gender equity in art education leadership is grounded in critical perspectives that interrogate power, institutional culture, and leadership norms. Feminist leadership theory and social justice leadership offer complementary frameworks for analysing how gendered hierarchies are reproduced within educational institutions and how leadership can be reconceptualised as ethical, participatory, and transformative. Together, these approaches prioritise accountability, inclusion, and equity as essential principles for institutional reform in contemporary art education.

Feminist Leadership Theory

Feminist leadership theory views leadership as a socially constructed practice shaped by historical and institutional power relations (Eagly & Carli, 2021; Marshall, 2019). It critiques traditional hierarchical models that privilege authority, control, and competition—traits historically coded as masculine—while marginalising collaborative and relational leadership styles (Bolden, 2018). By positioning gender as a central analytical lens, the theory reveals how leadership norms advantage certain identities and constrain others, thereby sustaining systemic inequities (Choudhry & Sharma, 2020).

A core principle of feminist leadership is shared power and relational accountability (McCarthy et al., 2022). Leadership is understood as collective and ethical rather than positional. Emphasising dialogue, empathy, reflexivity, and mutual empowerment (Sangster & Edwards, 2021), this approach encourages participatory governance and challenges exclusionary organizational cultures (Eagly & Carli, 2021).

Within art education, feminist leadership is particularly significant given the field's engagement with identity, representation, and critique. Organisations such as the National Art Education Association Women's Caucus advocate for centring marginalised artistic voices and re-examining dominant canons. Feminist leadership promotes equitable recruitment, transparent promotion pathways, and recognition of mentorship and collaborative labour as legitimate leadership contributions (Bolden, 2018; Marshall, 2019). In doing so, it reframes leadership effectiveness

as the capacity to cultivate inclusive, reflective, and innovative institutional cultures.

Social Justice Leadership

Social justice leadership asserts that equity must be deliberately embedded within institutional structures, policies, and practices (Shields, 2019; Theoharis, 2020). Rather than attributing inequality to individual shortcomings, it locates injustice within systemic arrangements that shape access to power and opportunity (Jean-Marie et al., 2021). Leaders are therefore called to identify and dismantle structural barriers affecting underrepresented groups.

This framework emphasises inclusive governance and equitable access to leadership roles (Shields, 2019). Practical strategies include transparent recruitment processes, targeted leadership development initiatives, and integration of gender equity goals into institutional strategic planning (Sangster & Edwards, 2021; Theoharis, 2020). Equity thus becomes operational rather than symbolic.

Accountability is central to social justice leadership. Mechanisms such as equity audits, demographic reporting, and ongoing policy review ensure measurable progress (Jean-Marie et al., 2021; Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2022). In art education contexts, these processes align leadership practice with broader social justice commitments, fostering cultures that are reflective, responsive, and capable of sustained transformation. Social justice leadership complements feminist perspectives by translating ethical commitments into structured, measurable institutional action.

Historical and Contextual Overview

Understanding gender equity in art education leadership requires historical and institutional analysis. Persistent gender disparities in educational leadership reveal how deeply embedded structural and cultural norms continue to shape access to authority.

Gender Dynamics in Educational Leadership

Although teaching has become a feminised profession globally, leadership positions remain disproportionately occupied by men. Women constitute the majority of teachers at primary and secondary levels in many countries, yet they are underrepresented as principals, department heads, and deans (Smith & Brown, 2021). This "leaky pipeline" phenomenon reflects declining female representation at higher leadership levels despite comparable qualifications (Eagly & Carli, 2018).

Gendered assumptions about leadership contribute significantly to this imbalance. Leadership is often associated with assertiveness and decisiveness—traits socially coded as masculine—while collaborative approaches are undervalued (Shakeshaft, 2019). Such norms shape recruitment, promotion, and appraisal systems, reinforcing male dominance across sectors, including art education (Laki & Badon, 2024).

Institutional barriers further restrict advancement. Limited mentoring access, exclusion from informal networks, unequal leadership development opportunities, and inflexible organizational cultures constrain women's career progression (Nguyen & Smith, 2022). Narratives of meritocracy frequently obscure these embedded biases (OECD, 2020).

Emerging research demonstrates that gender equity enhances institutional effectiveness. Evidence reviewed by Laki and Badon (2024) indicates that diverse leadership teams improve innovation, decision-making quality, and organizational inclusivity. These findings challenge deficit narratives and reinforce the need for intentional strategies to redress gender imbalances in educational leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2018; Smith & Brown, 2021).

Gender and Art Education

Gender Equity in Art Education Leadership

Art education occupies a unique position within educational systems, blending creative practice, cultural expression, and pedagogy. While it promotes inclusivity and critical inquiry, leadership within the field often reproduces the same gender hierarchies found across education. Women and gender-diverse practitioners remain underrepresented in senior roles across departments, associations, and policy bodies (National Art Education Association Women's Caucus, 2025; O'Connor, 2022).

Historically, art institutions have privileged male artists, scholars, and administrators, shaping leadership cultures that normalise male authority and marginalise alternative voices. These legacies continue to influence contemporary structures, affecting whose work is valued and who is seen as leadership material. As a result, implicit biases constrain leadership pathways despite the substantial contributions of women and gender-diverse educators (Cameron & Thompson, 2019).

In response, advocacy initiatives such as the Coalition for Feminisms in Art Education (formerly the National Art Education Association Women's Caucus) have advanced gender-conscious leadership discourse. By promoting equitable representation, feminist pedagogies, and inclusive practices, such efforts challenge entrenched power structures and encourage transparent policies, mentorship, and leadership development. However, meaningful progress requires sustained institutional commitment to redistributing power and embedding diversity at the core of artistic and educational excellence (O'Connor, 2022; Cameron & Thompson, 2019).

Key Challenges: Structural and Cultural Barriers

Gender inequity in art education leadership is sustained by structural barriers and cultural bias. Institutional systems often privilege linear career trajectories, disadvantaging women whose careers may be shaped by caregiving responsibilities (Eagly & Carli, 2023). Leadership selection criteria frequently undervalue diverse professional experiences, reinforcing historical inequities.

A major structural weakness is the lack of accountability mechanisms linking equity commitments to measurable outcomes. Frameworks such as the Canadian Dimensions Charter demonstrate how reporting requirements tied to funding can improve representation (Anderson et al., 2023; Government of Canada, 2023). In contrast, institutions without clear metrics struggle to translate equity rhetoric into practice (Okafor & Mwangi, 2023). Unequal access to funding, mentorship, and leadership development further narrows advancement opportunities (Hämäläinen & Koskinen, 2021; Mkhize & Ngcobo, 2024).

Cultural norms compound these barriers. Leadership remains associated with traditionally masculine traits, while collaborative and relational styles are undervalued (Eagly & Chin, 2019). Implicit bias in evaluation processes often advantages male candidates, even where competence is equivalent (Moss-Racusin et al., 2018; Tan & Lim, 2025). Intersectional factors intensify disadvantage, particularly for women from racial, ethnic, or caste-marginalised backgrounds (Crenshaw, 2018; Gupta & Clarke, 2022; Singh & Joshi, 2023).

Addressing these challenges requires policy reform alongside cultural transformation. Programmes combining mentorship, leadership training, and reflective practice—such as European and Australian equity networks—illustrate how institutional culture can shift toward more inclusive models (Kovačić & Meier, 2023).

Institutional Practices for Equity and Accountability

Advancing gender equity in art education leadership demands deliberate policy design, measurable targets, and transparent accountability systems. Equity goals must be embedded within institutional strategic plans, with clear benchmarks for recruitment, promotion, and leadership succession (Promoting Gender Equality in Education, 2025).

Crucially, these commitments must be supported by dedicated resources, performance-linked accountability, and continuous monitoring. Without financial investment, administrative backing, and regular evaluation, equity policies remain symbolic. Sustainable reform requires integrating gender equity into governance structures, leadership evaluation, and institutional culture, ensuring it becomes a permanent norm rather than a temporary initiative (Laki & Badon, 2024; African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies, 2025).

Leadership Development and Mentoring

Leadership development programmes are crucial for equipping underrepresented genders with the skills, confidence, and networks needed to navigate complex leadership environments. In art education, where creative and administrative leadership intersect, tailored programmes combine artistic vision with strategic management. Initiatives like the School for Art Leaders, run by professional bodies such as the National Art Education Association, integrate theory with practical strategies for fostering inclusive environments, helping

emerging leaders overcome systemic barriers (Promoting gender equality in education, 2025).

Mentoring complements formal training by offering personalized guidance, advocacy, and insight into institutional culture and career progression. Mentors serve as role models, demonstrating practical leadership and facilitating access to professional networks. Evidence shows that structured mentoring increases retention and satisfaction among female leaders (National Art Education Association Women's Caucus, 2025). Together, leadership programmes and mentoring foster peer networks, collective empowerment, and professional visibility, essential in competitive fields like art education (Gender, Art and Transformative Education, 2025).

Transparent Accountability Mechanisms

Transparent accountability is essential for achieving gender equity. Tools like gender equity scorecards track representation, participation, and leadership progression, allowing data-driven interventions and public reporting that reinforce institutional credibility.

Equity committees and dedicated accountability bodies review policies, evaluate outcomes, and ensure diverse perspectives inform decisions. Coupled with regular reporting on leadership demographics and professional development, these mechanisms embed equity into institutional operations, promote reflective practice, and strengthen leadership culture (Laki & Badon, 2024)

Case Examples of Institutional Change

Academic Institutional Reform: Structured mentorship and sponsorship programmes, particularly in art education, support career progression and leadership readiness for women and underrepresented genders (Morley, 2020; Thompson & Bush, 2021). Gender-responsive recruitment frameworks and data-driven reviews of promotion and leadership participation address structural inequities, ensuring equitable hiring, visibility, and workload distribution (Bain & Cumming, 2020; European Commission, 2021; O'Connor & White, 2022).

Professional Associations: National and international professional bodies reinforce gender equity by shaping disciplinary norms, offering leadership development, and providing evidence-based resources (Blackmore, 2019; Thompson & Bush, 2021). Dedicated diversity and inclusion committees monitor representation, evaluate policies, and foster collaboration between institutions and policymakers, linking advocacy to actionable accountability (National Art Education Association, 2023).

Accountability and Leadership Culture: Embedding accountability in institutional culture requires shifting from compliance-based models to relational, value-driven approaches that normalize equity. Participatory leadership practices, reflective forums, and equity-focused professional development promote shared

responsibility and distributed leadership (Acker, 2018; Blackmore, 2020; Oplatka, 2018; Lumby & Azaola, 2022).

Transparent reporting and community engagement extend accountability by communicating gender-disaggregated data, equity goals, and progress to stakeholders, fostering trust and enabling adaptive, evidence-based strategies for sustainable institutional change (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2021; Shields, 2019; Deem & Morley, 2022).

Implications for Policy and Practice

Sustainable gender equity requires operational policies embedded in accreditation, leadership standards, and funding criteria, alongside clear benchmarks and data-driven monitoring. Leaders play a critical role in translating policy into practice through inclusive behavior, mentoring, and structural reforms in recruitment, promotion, and leadership development.

Conclusion

Gender equity and accountability in art education leadership are vital for creating inclusive, democratically governed institutions. Meaningful change demands coordinated policy, practice, and accountability, along with sustained political will and reflective leadership. The benefits include diverse leadership, enhanced decision-making, and learning environments that reflect the inclusive values central to art education's mission.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

GENDER EQUALITY AND SCIENTIFIC LITERACY ON MATHEMATICS EDUCATION IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Introduction

Mathematics education remains a cornerstone of national growth and transformation because it provides the intellectual architecture upon which science, technology, engineering, and innovation are built. In contemporary knowledge-based economies, mathematical competence extends far beyond classroom performance; it functions as a strategic resource for productivity, technological advancement, and global competitiveness. Nations that prioritize mathematics education are better positioned to cultivate analytical thinkers capable of driving research, entrepreneurship, and evidence-informed decision-making. In this regard, mathematics is not simply a subject within the school curriculum—it is a developmental instrument.

Closely connected to this is the concept of scientific literacy. According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019), scientific literacy entails the ability to engage with scientific concepts, interpret data, evaluate evidence, and apply reasoning skills to societal and environmental challenges. These competencies are deeply rooted in mathematical understanding. Skills such as measurement, proportional reasoning, statistical interpretation, modelling, and logical deduction form the backbone of scientific inquiry. Without adequate mathematical grounding, learners' capacity to meaningfully participate in science-related discussions and innovations becomes significantly constrained.

Despite the recognized importance of mathematics for scientific literacy, gender disparities in participation and achievement remain a persistent concern, particularly at the senior secondary level. Global scholarship suggests that differences in mathematics outcomes are not primarily the result of biological or innate ability variations. Rather, they are shaped by sociocultural conditioning, entrenched stereotypes about gender and intellectual capacity, differential teacher expectations, and structural inequalities embedded within educational systems (Hyde, 2014; UNESCO, 2020). In many contexts, subtle messaging about who

"belongs" in mathematics-intensive fields influences learners' confidence, interest, and long-term aspirations.

Large-scale international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment have shown that while achievement gaps in basic mathematics performance have narrowed in certain regions, disparities persist in advanced mathematics enrolment, self-efficacy, and representation in STEM pathways (OECD, 2019). In developing regions, particularly across sub-Saharan Africa, these challenges are intensified by systemic factors including limited instructional resources, overcrowded classrooms, gender-biased pedagogical approaches, and socio-economic constraints that disproportionately affect girls (UNESCO, 2020). Thus, gender gaps are often sustained not by capability deficits but by environmental and structural conditions.

Within Nigeria and comparable educational systems, senior secondary education represents a decisive transition point. It is at this stage that students solidify foundational mathematical concepts and select subject combinations that influence tertiary education options and career trajectories. Research indicates that although girls frequently perform on par with boys in earlier schooling stages, their participation in advanced mathematics and science streams often declines during the senior secondary phase (Else-Quest et al., 2010). This shift is frequently accompanied by reduced mathematical self-concept and diminished confidence, factors that can significantly affect persistence in STEM-related disciplines. The implications are substantial, given that higher-level scientific engagement requires sophisticated mathematical reasoning, including data analysis, modelling, experimental design, and hypothesis testing.

The continued existence of gender disparities in mathematics education therefore represents more than an issue of fairness; it constitutes a broader developmental challenge. When female learners are underrepresented or inadequately supported in mathematics-intensive pathways, the scientific and technological workforce becomes narrower and less diverse. This limits innovation potential and perpetuates gender imbalances in high-growth sectors. Moreover, inequitable mathematics education reinforces intergenerational patterns of inequality, as access to STEM careers is closely linked to socio-economic mobility.

Addressing this challenge demands a shift away from simplistic assumptions about ability differences and toward a more comprehensive understanding of gender as socially constructed and institutionally reinforced (Hyde, 2014). Curriculum design, classroom discourse, assessment practices, textbook representations, and teacher beliefs all play critical roles in shaping learners' mathematical identities. Gender-responsive pedagogy—characterized by inclusive teaching strategies, equitable participation structures, and supportive feedback mechanisms—can help dismantle subtle barriers that discourage girls' sustained engagement in mathematics.

This chapter therefore engages with the structural, pedagogical, and psychosocial dimensions of gender disparity in senior secondary mathematics

education. It interrogates how institutional practices, classroom dynamics, and learner self-perceptions intersect to influence participation and achievement patterns. Furthermore, it explores how deliberate policy reforms, inclusive curriculum frameworks, and sustained teacher professional development initiatives can promote equitable mathematics learning environments.

By positioning gender-responsive mathematics education within the broader agenda of scientific literacy development, the discussion emphasizes that bridging gender gaps benefits all learners—not only girls. Inclusive mathematics classrooms foster diverse perspectives, collaborative problem-solving, and a culture of intellectual confidence that strengthens overall scientific engagement. Ultimately, achieving gender parity in mathematics education is framed not merely as a social justice objective, but as a strategic investment in national development, innovation capacity, and long-term economic resilience.

Gender Gaps in Mathematics Education

Gender gaps in education refer to observable differences between male and female learners in terms of access, participation, experiences, performance, and long-term outcomes (UNESCO, 2020). Within mathematics education, these gaps extend beyond test scores to include enrollment patterns in advanced mathematics courses, classroom participation, confidence levels, attitudes toward the subject, and career aspirations in mathematics-intensive disciplines (Hyde et al., 2008).

Over the past few decades, global data suggest that disparities in basic mathematics achievement between boys and girls have narrowed considerably. However, differences remain evident at higher levels of complexity, particularly in advanced mathematics, spatial reasoning, and competitive problem-solving contexts (Else-Quest et al., 2010). These disparities are not solely the result of innate ability differences; rather, they are shaped by a complex interplay of socio-cultural expectations, institutional practices, and psychological factors.

Classroom environments and teacher perceptions significantly influence how students engage with mathematics. Subtle biases in teacher expectations may reinforce stereotypical beliefs about mathematical competence, thereby affecting students' academic self-concept and performance (Gunderson et al., 2012). Furthermore, motivational theories emphasize that students' achievement-related choices are strongly influenced by their beliefs about competence, task value, and perceived support (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). When girls internalize societal messages suggesting that mathematics is more aligned with masculinity, their motivation and persistence in the subject may decline, particularly at the senior secondary level where academic specialization becomes more pronounced.

Thus, gender gaps in mathematics are multidimensional. They encompass cognitive outcomes (achievement scores), affective dimensions (attitudes and anxiety), behavioral components (course selection and participation), and long-term

trajectories (career pathways). Understanding these dimensions is essential for examining their broader implications for scientific literacy.

Scientific Literacy

Scientific literacy refers to the capacity to comprehend scientific concepts and processes, evaluate evidence critically, interpret data, and apply scientific reasoning to real-life issues (National Research Council, 2012). It extends beyond memorization of scientific facts to include analytical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the ability to make informed decisions on matters affecting society.

Mathematics serves as a foundational pillar of scientific literacy. Quantitative reasoning enables learners to interpret graphs, analyze experimental results, measure variables accurately, and construct logical arguments (OECD, 2016). Scientific inquiry depends heavily on mathematical skills such as proportional reasoning, algebraic manipulation, statistical interpretation, and modeling.

When students experience persistent challenges in mathematics, their ability to engage deeply with scientific content may be compromised. Difficulty in interpreting numerical data, understanding probability, or applying formulas can limit comprehension in subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology, and environmental science. Consequently, gender disparities in mathematics achievement and engagement can translate into unequal development of scientific literacy, particularly during the senior secondary phase when scientific specialization intensifies.

literacy is increasingly recognized as essential for civic participation in contemporary societies. Issues such as climate change, public health crises, technological innovation, and economic development require citizens who can interpret scientific information critically. Therefore, ensuring equitable access to strong mathematical foundations is not merely an academic concern but a societal imperative.

Gender Gaps and Impact on Scientific Literacy

Achievement and Participation: Empirical studies frequently report that male students outperform female students in certain areas of mathematics at the senior secondary level, especially in complex problem-solving and spatial reasoning tasks (Hoffman, 2012; Stoet & Geary, 2018). Although overall averages may appear similar in some contexts, performance gaps tend to widen among high-achieving groups, influencing representation in advanced mathematics streams.

These achievement differences often translate into gendered patterns of participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) pathways (Wang et al., 2016). Female students may be underrepresented in advanced mathematics courses, which serve as prerequisites for science-intensive disciplines. This underrepresentation can subsequently limit their access to STEM careers.

Because mathematics underpins scientific reasoning, gaps in achievement can weaken students' capacity to analyze scientific data, interpret quantitative evidence, and engage in rigorous experimentation. A student who avoids advanced mathematics may struggle with calculus-based physics, statistical research methods, or quantitative chemistry. Thus, disparities in mathematics achievement have cascading effects on scientific literacy development.

Attitudes, Self-Efficacy, and Mathematics Anxiety: Academic success is not determined solely by cognitive ability; affective variables play a crucial role. Self-efficacy, the belief in one's capability to perform specific tasks, strongly predicts persistence and achievement in mathematics. Research indicates that female students frequently report lower mathematical self-efficacy and higher levels of mathematics anxiety than their male counterparts, even when objective performance is comparable (Maloney et al., 2012; Devine et al., 2018).

Mathematics anxiety can impair working memory during problem-solving tasks, thereby negatively affecting performance. Over time, repeated experiences of anxiety or self-doubt may discourage students from selecting challenging mathematics courses. Reduced exposure to advanced mathematical content limits opportunities to develop higher-order reasoning skills essential for scientific literacy. Furthermore, students' perceptions of belonging influence academic engagement. When girls perceive mathematics classrooms as environments dominated by male competence, their sense of identity alignment with the subject may diminish. This psychological disengagement can have long-term implications for participation in science-related fields.

Socio-Cultural Influences and Stereotype Threat: Societal beliefs about gender and intellectual ability significantly shape educational experiences. Cultural narratives that associate mathematical brilliance with masculinity may subtly influence students' aspirations and performance expectations. Parents, teachers, and peers may unconsciously communicate lower expectations for girls in mathematics-intensive domains.

The concept of stereotype threat explains how awareness of negative stereotypes can impair performance (Steele & Aronson, 1995). When female students are reminded of stereotypes suggesting weaker mathematical ability, their performance may decline due to increased cognitive pressure (Spencer et al., 1999). This phenomenon illustrates how psychological factors rooted in social context can affect measurable academic outcomes.

Additionally, limited visibility of female role models in mathematics and science can reinforce perceptions that these fields are male-oriented. Such socio-cultural constraints contribute to reduced participation and hinder the equitable development of scientific literacy.

Strategies for Bridging Gender Gaps:

Gender-Responsive Pedagogy: Gender-responsive teaching involves deliberate instructional practices designed to create inclusive learning environments. Differentiated instruction recognizes diverse learning preferences and prior experiences, enabling teachers to tailor tasks appropriately (Tomlinson, 2014). This flexibility can help reduce performance disparities. Collaborative learning approaches encourage peer interaction, shared problem-solving, and equitable participation (Webb, 2009). Structured group activities can enhance confidence and reduce anxiety, particularly for students hesitant to engage in competitive settings.

Connecting mathematical concepts to real-world contexts increases relevance and engagement (Boaler, 2016). When learners see how mathematics applies to health, economics, technology, and social issues, they are more likely to value the subject. Such contextualization can benefit all students and counteract gendered perceptions of mathematics.

Teacher Professional Development: Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping classroom climate and student motivation. Professional development programmes that address unconscious bias, equitable questioning strategies, and inclusive feedback can reduce gender disparities (Carter et al., 2018). Training that emphasizes growth mindset principles—the understanding that intelligence develops through effort—can challenge fixed stereotypes about ability (Dweck, 2006). Teachers who communicate high expectations for all students and provide constructive feedback foster resilience and persistence. Consistent encouragement and balanced participation opportunities contribute to equitable learning experiences.

Interventions to Strengthen Mathematical Confidence: Targeted interventions can enhance female students' confidence and persistence. Mentoring initiatives, mathematics enrichment programmes, and workshops focused on self-efficacy development have shown positive outcomes (Logel et al., 2019; Beilock et al., 2010). Exposure to successful female professionals in STEM helps challenge stereotypes and promote aspirational identity formation. School-based programmes that address mathematics anxiety through cognitive and emotional regulation strategies can also improve performance. When students learn to reinterpret anxiety as a normal response rather than evidence of inability, their engagement and achievement may improve.

Policy Implications

Curriculum Reform: Curriculum frameworks should present mathematics as a dynamic and socially relevant discipline. Integrating problem-based learning and interdisciplinary tasks can enhance engagement and demonstrate the applicability of mathematical reasoning to societal challenges. Highlighting diverse contributors to mathematics and science may also broaden students' perceptions of who belongs in these fields.

Equity-Oriented Assessment Practices: High-stakes examinations may intensify anxiety and disadvantage students susceptible to stereotype threat.

Balanced assessment systems that incorporate projects, collaborative tasks, and performance-based evaluations can provide multiple pathways for demonstrating understanding. Such approaches may reduce gendered performance patterns.

Monitoring, Data Collection, and Accountability: Educational authorities should systematically collect disaggregated data on gender differences in mathematics achievement, course enrollment, and attitudes. Regular analysis enables identification of persistent gaps and evaluation of intervention effectiveness. Evidence-based policymaking depends on accurate monitoring mechanisms.

Conclusion

Addressing gender gaps in mathematics education is fundamental to strengthening scientific literacy among senior secondary school students. Differences in achievement, confidence, participation, and socio-cultural experiences collectively influence students' ability to engage with mathematics and science meaningfully. Bridging these gaps requires coordinated efforts at classroom, institutional, and policy levels. Gender-responsive pedagogy, teacher professional development, curriculum reform, confidence-building interventions, and systematic monitoring are essential components of a comprehensive strategy.

Promoting gender equity in mathematics education not only enhances individual academic outcomes but also contributes to broader societal advancement. By ensuring that all learners develop strong quantitative and scientific reasoning skills, education systems can cultivate informed citizens capable of addressing complex global challenges.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SCIENTIFIC LITERACY AND WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

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Introduction

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is a vital force in the economic and scientific development of a nation. The success of a nation depends largely on their scientific and technological capabilities. STEM education is the hinge on which technological advancement and development rotate. It is the foundation for sustainable development, and this will always lead to positive changes manifested in increased capacity of people to have control over material assets, intellectual resources, and ideology. According to Ugwuada (2011) STEM is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in four specific disciplines - science, technology, engineering and mathematics in an interdisciplinary and applied approach. STEM education is regarded as an aspect of education that prepare students for STEM related careers (Eurostat,2022). This calls for adequate participation of men and women in STEM education.

However, global observation has shown an indication of under participation of women and girls in STEM Education. Elan (2012) opined that the presence of women in the fields of STEM remains significantly lower than that of men, even in some of the world's wealthiest regions. While the number of women enrolling in higher education is increasing rapidly in many countries and in some has surpassed male enrolment, men significantly outnumber women in STEM education (UNESCO, 2010). Studies by Aderemi, et al., 2013 and Udeani & Ejikeme, 2011) have consistently observed low participation of women in STEM. Although remarkable improvement has been recorded in women enrolment in education generally, however, the gender imbalance in STEM has persisted.

Women's access to education has received attention at the policy and enrolment stages, but not at the level of women's participation in various

disciplines of STEM education. Many has not realised the need for gender equity in STEM education.

The idea of gender equity describes that there is a gender disparity in STEM education. Gender disparity or gender gap denotes a degree of imbalance between male and female in access and participation in STEM education courses (Abdullahi, et al., 2019). Increasing the education of women in STEM would lead to more educated, more empowered, and more productive nation. This is because the girls of today will become the mothers of tomorrow, and their education will have a reflective impact on the future of the nation. Therefore, investing in the education of girls, particularly in STEM, is not just beneficial for the girls themselves, but also for the future of the nation.

In the light of the above, the paper reviews the concept of scientific literacy, women participation in STEM education in Nigeria, challenges affecting women participation in STEM and possible ways to overcomes the challenges.

Concept of Scientific Literacy

Scientific literacy is a broad concept incorporating scientific opinions and ideas within and across different scientific disciplines and practices. According to Anelli (2011) scientific literacy is the degree to which science education helps people solve personally meaningful everyday challenges and make critical decisions related to science. Being able to overcome everyday challenges, being sensitive to one environment and while taking the right measure is scientific literacy. A scientifically literate person should be able to utilized skills, values and knowledge associated with science for critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making (Genc, 2015). According to Olodu (2013) Scientific literate person should be able to use scientific thinking in making personal decision, participate intelligently in societal discussions on science and attain the skills and knowledge that are required for being productive in the current and future economic as well as global development. To be scientifically literate is to understanding science and its application; being able to critically think about science and deals with scientific expertise (Holbrook & Rannikmae, 2009).

There are numbers of reasons scientific literacy is considered important. The society we live in depends largely in science and technology and scientific knowledge makes it possible. The decision-making and problem-solving skills are dependent on the level of scientific literacy of a person. Therefore, everyone in the society both male and female should be reasonably knowledgeable in STEM education. Decisions that are made everyday have the capability to affect life in terms of energy consumption, personal hygiene, natural resources as well as environmental sustainability. Aina (2020) stated that the position of scientific literacy in the functionality of any science student in modern society cannot be overemphasised. For any science student or graduate to be able to fit into society is dependent on his/her scientific literacy skills. It is important to state that the 21st century

society requires populace knowledgeable in STEM education. For this reason, equitable involvement of men and women, boys and girls in STEM education must be given considerable attention and utmost priority if a nation is to be develop scientifically.

Women Participation in STEM Education in Nigeria.

Women have a vital role to play in STEM education and in contributing to development and transformation of the world of science and technology; but they remain substantially under-represented in STEM education. Available statistics show that the number of women in STEM is growing but the issue of gender parity remains elusive as men continue to outnumber women (STEM Women, 2022). The 2015 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report provides an analysis of the gender gap in science and engineering. The report notes that women are fairly well represented in some related science disciplines – including health, agriculture and environmental management, but are a minority in other fields such as energy, engineering, transportation, information technology and computing. These areas are vital for the actualization of developments.

The role of women in STEM education can never be overemphasised. Promoting a balanced participation of men and women in STEM is a valid initiative not only on moral and social grounds but for the benefits that would come to the scientific world. The input of women skills would have a great contribution to STEM education. According to Konyeha, et al., (2021) the gender inequality in STEM is a multifactorial issue that includes social, cultural and institutional factors that cannot be overlooked.

Okafor (2019) described that women continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions within STEM due to various constraints they face, some of these challenges include the perception of STEM as a difficult field, societal beliefs that STEM is primarily for males, cultural norms in African societies, fear, personal choice, and lack of interest all of which significantly influence women's participation in STEM fields.

Gender inequality is common and can result in barriers for women to be promoted, credited for their achievements, nominated for leadership positions or viewed as leaders. Once there is lower representation of female scientists in STEM education, it translates into fewer female role models for girls and limited mentoring opportunities. Women in Nigeria and other parts of Africa have been a disadvantaged group when it comes to educational and career opportunities in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) field (Okafor, 2019).

Most girls in schools were encouraged to take courses that were regarded easier and more adaptable as a woman, while avoiding male-dominated areas such as engineering and technology. This dominance of male in STEM has limited women from leadership role in STEM. However, the United Nations Sustainable

Development Goals (UN-SDGs) are determined in their efforts towards bridging the existing gaps in gender imbalance. Goal 5 of UN-SDGs specifically focuses on advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women given that the lack of representation spans across all levels including education, career, leadership, and politics, among others. Sessou, (2023), gender imbalance and stereotypes in the workplace can limit career advancement opportunities. Also, insufficient funding for women-led research projects and limited representation of women in leadership roles in the scientific community.

Challenges Affecting Women Participation in STEM Education

Some of the challenges affecting women participation in STEM education are as follows;

1. ***Cultural Belief System:*** STEM education mostly in the areas of engineering and technology are often culturally framed as "masculine," which discourages women from venturing into careers in these areas. This stereotype is reinforced by societal expectations, educational curricula, and workplace cultures that prioritize male participation in STEM education (Master & Meltzoff, 2020). This has affected the role of women in the society.

The cultural norms and barriers that men are superior to women in terms of the use of their knowledge and cognitive skills shouldn't be sustained. The brain makeup of both genders is not superior to each other (Pascual-Leone, et al., 2005). Also, peer norms and lack of personal value make women move away from STEM courses.

2. ***Curriculum and Pedagogical Practice:*** The STEM curriculum and pedagogy may not be engaging for women properly and often promote their disinterest, which sometimes makes the female gender prefer non-science-based subjects at the elementary and secondary school level. Additionally, teaching methods might not be inclusive, often discouraging women from participating actively in STEM classes. It should also be noted that many schools lack adequate facilities and resources, such as laboratories and computers, which are essential for effective STEM teaching and learning.

3. ***Inadequate Female Role Models and Mentorship programmes:*** Low participation of women in STEM courses, results in a low percentage of women who are found to be striving and occupying leadership positions in STEM education (Ihuoma,2020). Also, lack of visible female role models in STEM fields can also be seen as a discouragement for young and aspiring girls to pursue careers in STEM fields. There is a lack of mentorship programmes, networking opportunities, and professional support systems for women in STEM (ASM, 2024).

4. ***Gender Discrimination:*** This is another factor facing female ineffective participation in STEM education. The discrimination results from combinations of inbuilt biases that make them less likely to participate in mathematical, critical, and technical profession. Some teachers prefer to call only male students to answer

questions in class thereby making female students indifferent toward STEM education.

5. ***Institutional Factors:*** Some factors like instructional materials, illustrations and applications presented in resource materials are more familiar to the experience of males than that of females. Uduani (2012) stated that textbook writers are bias, using only males to represent engineering and technology profession. This is discouraging to the female students.

6. ***Workplace Discrimination:*** Discrimination at workplace, unconscious bias, and sexual harassment can disrupt women's careers in STEM at an early stage. Women in STEM careers often face discrimination and biases, which can limit their career advancement opportunities (Musso, et al., 2022) except a woman receives support from her acquaintances, surviving with the male folk may be a subject of debate.

Way Forward

The following should be adopted to encourage women participation and playing leading role in STEM education;

1. Female Gender should be encouraged to Enrol and Participate in Science-Based Subjects

Women should be encouraged by providing scholarships and special grant specifically designed for women in STEM education. This will alleviate financial barriers and increase participation of women in STEM education. Promoting gender equality in STEM education is crucial for ensuring equal access to quality education and fostering innovation. Gender equality such as access to education and enrolment in STEM subjects will assist in promoting equal access to quality education. Despite progress in enrolment rates, women remain underrepresented in STEM fields due to persistent socio-cultural barriers, stereotypes, and limited access to resources.

2. Introduction of Mentorship Programmes.

Mentorship by female professionals help young girls to pursue STEM careers through hands-on experiences and role models is important in building confidence and providing guidance to the mentees. Mentorship plays a crucial role in promoting career guidance, boosting confidence, and providing socio emotional support (ASM, 2024). Experienced female researchers should have direct communication with the young ones, and also serve as inspiration to them. Mentorship programmes should be encouraged in all institution of learning, especially among the women.

Establishing mentorship will encourage the younger ones to speak up and by then acquire experiences from the senior STEM female professionals and through which advice is gained, support is rendered, and guidance to navigate through. These efforts would encourage the girls to pursue STEM education, promoting female mentorship, and bring about increase of female in STEM education leadership.

3. Creating Awareness and Advocacy for Gender balance in STEM Education

Gender stereotypes significantly affect female interest and self-confidence in STEM education. The female gender often underestimate their abilities in mathematics and engineering due to societal perceptions associating these fields with masculine skills. The awareness of gender disparities in STEM education has sparked stronger advocacy for change. Therefore, International organizations like UNESCO, the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD), and other gender equality movements have spotlighted the discrimination women encounter in STEM education. Efforts through advocacy and creating awareness of gender equity will go a long way in addressing these challenges. Closing the gender gap in STEM education can be accomplished by attracting and retaining more women in STEM education.

4. Empowerment of Women

Women should be empowered and encouraged by provision of financial support and regular counsel on the need to undertake STEM education. Also, regular support from family and critical stakeholders will play a vital role in ensuring women are well represented in STEM education.

Conclusion

The landscape of STEM for women is complex because global observation has shown an indication of under representation of women in STEM education. Women access to education has received boost but not at the level of women participation in STEM education. Scientific literacy is a complex concept incorporating scientific opinions and ideas within and across different scientific discipline and practices. To be scientifically literate is to understand science and its applications; being able to critically think about science and deals with scientific expertise. Therefore, everyone in the society both male and female should be reasonably knowledgeable in STEM education. The role of women in STEM education cannot be over emphasized. But affected by cultural belief, curriculum and pedagogy, lack of role model and mentorship programme etc. By addressing these challenges, we can work towards a system where women are equally represented in STEM education.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP BEYOND REPRESENTATION: A MORAL PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO GENDER EQUITY, POWER, AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION

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Introduction

The conversation on gender equity in educational leadership has largely focused on numbers especially the proportion of women occupying senior administrative roles using these figures as primary indicators of progress (Fuller et al., 2018). Although such measures provide visible proof of institutional advancement, they also expose deeper conceptual shortcomings that demand critical reflection. The underlying belief has been that increasing women's presence in leadership automatically leads to meaningful organizational transformation. Yet research increasingly demonstrates that while representation is important, it alone cannot secure authentic gender equity in educational settings (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014).

This chapter contends that advancing gender equity requires moving beyond a purely representational lens toward an ethical reorientation of leadership. Instead of simply counting how many women hold leadership positions, more fundamental questions must be raised: What values should shape leadership in education? Which ethical standards ought to guide decision-making? In what ways should authority be exercised to foster justice, care, and accountability? These inquiries shift the focus from demographic balance to moral purpose—redirecting attention from numerical equality to ethical integrity (Stefkovich, 2018). Overreliance on representation risks reducing equity to symbolic inclusion, where women attain leadership roles but remain bound by entrenched masculine norms and hierarchical power structures (Christman & McClellan, 2016).

Drawing from multiple philosophical traditions—including justice theory, care ethics, and virtue ethics—this chapter advances a framework that situates gender equity within the broader practice of ethical leadership. Contemporary justice theories illuminate how institutional systems either promote or hinder equitable participation (Horsford et al., 2020). Care ethics reimagines leadership

as relational and responsive, challenging rigid hierarchical models (Brooks & Arnold, 2018). Virtue ethics emphasizes the cultivation of character, moral dispositions, and practical wisdom essential for responsible leadership (Grace, 2019). Given that educational institutions are entrusted with shaping human development and civic responsibility, the ethical dimensions of leadership within these spaces carry profound and far-reaching significance.

Gender Equity and the Limits of Representational Leadership

Gender equity entails fairness in opportunities and outcomes for women and men, recognising that different social and structural conditions require context-sensitive interventions rather than identical treatment (Sen, 1999; Unterhalter, 2005). Unlike equality, which emphasises sameness, equity prioritises just outcomes, particularly in leadership domains where women remain underrepresented despite formal inclusion policies (Acker, 2006).

Representational leadership assumes that increasing the numerical presence of women in leadership automatically produces gender-equitable outcomes. However, evidence shows that representation alone does not dismantle entrenched institutional norms. In Nigerian universities, for instance, formal gender policies coexist with informal selection practices and male-dominated institutional cultures that constrain women's authority and progression (Igiebor, 2023).

Similarly, structural and socio-cultural factors such as motherhood expectations, limited access to research networks, and time constraints continue to hinder women's advancement into senior academic leadership in Nigeria (Ala, 2025). These barriers reflect what Ely and Meyerson (2000) describe as second-generation gender bias—subtle, systemic norms that appear neutral but disproportionately disadvantage women, even when formal equality exists.

In the political sphere, Nigeria's National Gender Policy seeks to promote women's representation; however, patriarchal norms, financial barriers, and exclusion from party power structures weaken the substantive impact of such representation (Agboola & Alade, 2025; Mama, 2007).

Generally, increasing women's numerical presence in leadership is necessary but insufficient for achieving meaningful gender equity. Sustainable progress requires structural reforms, cultural transformation, and equity-driven policies that address deep-seated institutional and socio-cultural constraints.

Representation in Educational Leadership: What it Means

In educational leadership, representation has both descriptive and substantive dimensions. Descriptive representation refers to whether the demographic composition of leaders—especially women—reflects their proportion in the teaching profession or broader population, often targeted through affirmative action and diversity policies (Bittner & Goodyear-Grant, 2017; Fuller et al., 2018). Substantive representation, by contrast, focuses on whether leaders actively

advocate for the interests of specific groups, regardless of their gender. Women in leadership may adopt dominant, masculine styles or fail to prioritize gender equity, while male leaders could theoretically advance equity, though this is uncommon without women's advocacy (Christman & McClellan, 2016; Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014).

Policy approaches often assume gender is binary and uniform, overlooking diversity among women in terms of race, class, sexuality, and disability (Horsford et al., 2020). Intersectional perspectives reveal that leadership teams achieving gender parity with mostly white, middle-class women may still exclude marginalized groups (Fuller et al., 2018). Similarly, the idea that "presence alone ensures justice" is flawed; while women leaders can influence culture and serve as role models, true change requires addressing entrenched power structures and the moral responsibilities of leadership (Stefkovich, 2018).

Power and Authority in Educational Institutions: Moral Dimensions of Decision-Making

Power in educational organizations shapes social relationships, organizational culture, and institutional actions (Ball, 2016). Leadership involves using this power to influence behavior, set priorities, allocate resources, and define legitimate knowledge and practices. Authority is recognized legitimate power, maintained through fairness and commitment to worthy purposes (Grace, 2019). Gender equity is central to moral authority and leadership legitimacy; excluding women undermines fairness and democratic principles (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014).

Power also operates subtly through discourse, routines, and everyday interactions (Ball, 2016). Simply increasing female representation does not ensure equity if leadership remains embedded in masculine power networks (Christman & McClellan, 2016; Fuller et al., 2018;). Leadership in education carries a fiduciary responsibility: leaders hold power to serve students and communities, acting ethically, wisely, and accountably to promote well-being and human flourishing (Grace, 2019; Stefkovich, 2018).

Why Representation Alone Is Ethically Insufficient: A Philosophical Critique

Purely representational approaches reduce justice to counting numbers, overlooking broader concerns of fair allocation, recognition of diverse identities, procedural fairness, and human development (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014). Measuring gender equity only through numbers can mask deficits in conflict resolution, knowledge recognition, or meaningful participation (Horsford et al., 2020).

Such approaches risk tokenism, where a few highly visible women face pressure to conform, represent all women, and balance contradictory expectations, undermining leadership effectiveness (Bittner & Goodyear-Grant, 2017; Christman & McClellan, 2016). Tokenism is not just ineffective—it is unjust, treating

individuals as symbols rather than full agents, while preserving exclusionary structures (Fuller et al., 2018).

Representational strategies often ignore intersectionality, leaving leadership predominantly white, middle-class, heterosexual, and able-bodied, and failing to achieve true equity (Horsford et al., 2020). Without addressing power structures, organizational cultures, and the nature of leadership roles, simply adding women may enhance diversity superficially but maintain inequitable systems (Stefkovich, 2018; Grace, 2019).

Ethical Leadership and Accountability: Justice, Care, and Responsibility

Ethical educational leadership must be grounded in three interconnected principles: justice, care, and responsibility. These principles, from distinct moral philosophical traditions, together provide frameworks for understanding and practicing leadership transcending gender categories while remaining attentive to power and equity issues. Justice in educational leadership emphasizes fair institutional structures according to principles free and rational persons would accept equally (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014). Contemporary justice theories suggest leadership practices should ensure equal educational opportunity access, protect all community members' rights, and structure resources to benefit vulnerable students (Grace, 2019).

However, feminist philosophers critique overly abstract justice approaches as insufficiently attentive to power relations and marginalized perspectives. Justice requires not only fair resource allocation but also eliminating domination and oppression in all forms. In educational contexts, this means attending to how structures enable or constrain different groups' participation and self-determination, examining not just equitable distribution but whether cultures silence voices, devalue knowledge forms, or marginalize identities (Horsford et al., 2020). Gender-just leadership requires actively dismantling domination patterns, creating meaningful participation structures across differences, and cultivating cultures recognizing diverse contributions (Stefkovich, 2018).

Care ethics challenges justice theories' abstraction and universalism, emphasizing relationships, responsiveness to particular others, and responsibilities from interdependence (Brooks & Arnold, 2018). Applied to educational leadership, care ethics suggests leaders should cultivate caring relationships throughout school communities, attend carefully to particular individuals' needs, and recognize fundamental community member interdependence. This contrasts with hierarchical authority, standardized procedures, and impersonal administration models. Care-oriented leadership prioritizes relationships over efficiency, recognizing effective education depends on trusting connections among teachers, students, and communities.

Responsibility in educational leadership connects justice and care while adding accountability dimensions. Drawing on virtue and professional ethics traditions,

responsibility emphasizes character, dispositions, and commitments leaders must cultivate (Grace, 2019). Responsible leaders recognize fiduciary duty weight, exercise power with wisdom and restraint, remain accountable to multiple stakeholders, and continuously reflect on whether actions serve educational missions (Stefkovich, 2018). Responsibility involves both forward-looking obligations by virtue of positions and backward-looking answerability for actions and decisions.

Re-thinking Gender Equity through Moral Philosophy

Justice theory, care ethics, and virtue ethics provide complementary perspectives for rethinking gender equity in educational leadership. Contemporary justice approaches highlight that formal equality alone is insufficient when systemic disadvantages persist (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014). Three-dimensional justice—redistribution, recognition, and representation—addresses this: redistribution ensures fair access to leadership roles and resources; recognition challenges cultural biases privileging masculine norms; and representation guarantees meaningful participation in decision-making (Horsford et al., 2020). These dimensions interact: increasing women's formal presence alone is ineffective if resources or cultural valuation remain unequal (Fuller et al., 2018). Structural injustices—like biased selection criteria, exclusionary networks, and caregiving responsibilities—further constrain advancement (Christman & McClellan, 2016).

Care ethics complements justice by emphasizing relationships, context, and responsiveness (Brooks & Arnold, 2018). It highlights the importance of relational leadership and the value of care-oriented qualities often associated with women, such as emotional intelligence and attentiveness, which are essential for effective educational leadership (Grace, 2019).

Virtue ethics adds focus on character, practical wisdom, and ethical judgment (Stefkovich, 2018). Leadership excellence relies on virtues like courage, integrity, and care, cultivated through experience and judgment, rather than mere adherence to rules.

Implications for Educational Leadership Practice

Advancing from traditional, representational notions of leadership toward ethical leadership necessitates profound shifts in how institutions define, cultivate, and evaluate leadership. Institutions must rethink leadership itself, moving away from hierarchical, authority-centered models toward distributed, relational approaches that view leadership as a collective, context-dependent practice (Ball, 2016). Distributed leadership theory highlights that leadership is enacted by multiple actors working collaboratively, with responsibilities and influence shared across leaders, followers, and situational demands. This approach resonates with care ethics, emphasizing relational interdependence and challenging the dominant individualistic and heroic leadership paradigms that often favor masculine styles (Fuller et al., 2018).

Selection processes for leadership positions require fundamental redesign. Conventional criteria, which prioritize assertiveness, competitiveness, and self-promotion, tend to privilege traditionally masculine behaviors while marginalizing candidates who excel in collaborative, relational, or ethically grounded approaches (Christman & McClellan, 2016). Institutions committed to ethical leadership should adopt selection frameworks explicitly rooted in principles of justice, care, and responsibility. Such frameworks should evaluate candidates' capacity for relationship-building, equitable decision-making, power-sharing, stakeholder responsiveness, and reflective practice (Stefkovich, 2018). Moreover, selection processes themselves must exemplify fairness and inclusivity through diverse search committees, transparent criteria, structured interviews to minimize bias, and opportunities for broad stakeholder input (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014).

Leadership development programmes also require reorientation to nurture ethical capacities alongside technical skills. Traditional preparation often emphasizes managerial competence and data-driven decision-making but neglects moral reasoning, social justice, and relational skills (Grace, 2019). Ethical leadership development should integrate moral philosophy, critical analyses of power and privilege, mentorship and reflective practice to foster practical wisdom, and deliberate cultivation of care, justice, and responsibility. It must also address gender dynamics and systemic inequities in educational leadership by examining masculine organizational norms, exploring intersectional identities, and equipping leaders to challenge structural inequities (Horsford et al., 2020).

Evaluating leadership effectiveness should extend beyond conventional performance metrics to include ethical and relational dimensions. Current evaluation systems often focus narrowly on measurable outcomes, such as student achievement and graduation rates (Ball, 2016). While these indicators are important, they can inadvertently reward efficiency-focused leadership while overlooking ethical responsibilities and relational practices. Ethical evaluation frameworks should assess how leaders exercise power responsibly, foster relationships, promote equity, respond to diverse stakeholder needs, and model institutional values (Stefkovich, 2018).

Finally, institutional policies and structures must be critically examined and reformed to eliminate barriers to ethical and equitable leadership. This includes addressing work arrangements that conflict with family responsibilities, implementing family-friendly policies, ensuring fair compensation, providing comprehensive support for leaders, and establishing robust accountability mechanisms (Fuller et al., 2018). Together, these reforms foster leadership that is morally grounded, relationally responsive, and organizationally transformative.

Conclusion

This chapter contends that achieving authentic gender equity in educational leadership requires a shift from purely representational thinking to an ethical,

values-centered approach—moving from counting bodies to examining principles, from numerical parity to moral excellence. While increasing women's presence in leadership positions remains crucial, representation alone is insufficient for transforming organizational cultures, dismantling entrenched power structures, or ensuring leadership practices embody justice, care, and responsibility. Relying solely on representation as a measure of equity is problematic for multiple interconnected reasons: it reduces justice to demographic statistics, neglecting recognition, participation, and capability dimensions; risks perpetuating tokenism, where women occupy positions symbolically without meaningful authority; often overlooks intersectionality by treating gender as a singular axis while masking how it intersects with race, class, and sexuality; and fundamentally fails to confront the underlying power dynamics and organizational cultures that produce inequity.

Grounded in justice theory, care ethics, and virtue ethics, this chapter articulates a vision of educational leadership that transcends gender categories while remaining acutely attentive to gendered power dynamics. Justice-oriented leadership emphasizes equitable distribution of positions and resources while actively working to eliminate domination and oppression in all forms. Care-oriented leadership foregrounds relationships, responsiveness, and recognition of mutual interdependence. Responsibility-oriented leadership prioritizes character, practical wisdom, and accountability to diverse stakeholders. Collectively, these ethical frameworks provide actionable guidance for cultivating leadership that promotes substantive equity rather than superficial parity.

The practical implications are significant. Educational institutions must reconceptualize leadership itself, embracing distributed, collaborative, and relational models. Selection and promotion processes should evaluate ethical commitment alongside technical competency. Leadership development programmes need to cultivate moral capacities through engagement with philosophical reasoning, critical power analyses, and reflective practice. Evaluation frameworks should integrate ethical dimensions alongside traditional performance metrics. Furthermore, institutional policies and structures must be transformed to remove barriers and create conditions conducive to ethical leadership.

Importantly, an ethical approach to gender equity does not diminish the significance of women's representation or the ongoing need to confront discrimination and bias. Rather, it situates representation within a broader moral framework, recognizing that representation matters because it can contribute to justice, recognition, and transformed institutional cultures—but also acknowledging its limits in achieving structural and cultural change. The aim is not numerical parity for its own sake but cultivating educational institutions that embody justice, care, and responsibility, where all members can participate fully, develop their capacities, and contribute to collective flourishing.

Advancing this ethical vision requires sustained commitment from all institutional members. Addressing structural inequities is a shared responsibility,

demanding critical reflection on assumptions, a willingness to challenge entrenched patterns, cultivation of practical wisdom through dialogue and reflection, and the courage to act on ethical principles even in difficult circumstances. Leadership in education must be recognized as a profoundly moral practice, with significant implications for human development. Those entrusted with institutional power carry special responsibilities to exercise it justly, carefully, and accountably. Ultimately, the critical question is not merely how many women occupy leadership positions but what kind of leadership educational institutions manifest. The quality of leadership determines whether schools serve as spaces for human flourishing, democratic engagement, and social justice—or as sites that reproduce patterns of domination. Ethical gender equity, understood as a core leadership practice, honors human dignity, recognizes diverse forms of excellence, and ensures that educational institutions fulfill their mission of cultivating human capabilities and contributing to a more just society.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION, CAREER PROGRESSION AND LEADERSHIP PATHWAYS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

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Introduction

Women make up a substantial portion of the global education workforce, particularly at primary and secondary levels, yet their representation sharply diminishes in leadership roles within higher education institutions. Recent global analyses consistently show that while women predominate in teaching positions, men overwhelmingly occupy roles such as principals, deans, and senior administrative posts. This persistent imbalance exists despite women's expanded access to higher education, professional qualifications, and extensive administrative experience. Research conducted since 2022 indicates that these gender disparities in educational leadership are not due to deficiencies in women's capabilities but are instead rooted in systemic, cultural, and institutional barriers that constrain their career advancement. Such disparities pose significant challenges for educational governance, equity, and institutional effectiveness, particularly in developing contexts where leadership decisions directly shape access to, quality of, and sustainability in education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2023; Oplatka & Arar, 2022).

The trajectory of career progression and leadership in educational administration is increasingly understood as a complex process influenced by organizational structures, promotion practices, informal networks, and social expectations tied to gender roles. Empirical evidence shows that women frequently encounter slower promotion, limited access to strategic leadership positions, and exclusion from decision-making networks, even when their performance equals that of male colleagues. Educational leadership pathways often favor linear career models and masculine leadership norms, which disadvantage women whose professional paths may be disrupted by caregiving responsibilities or restricted by institutional bias. Contemporary scholarship stresses that enhancing women's representation requires more than simply increasing numbers; it necessitates intentional restructuring of leadership pipelines, clear and transparent promotion criteria, and gender-responsive leadership development initiatives that support sustained advancement in educational administration (Morley, 2022).

Women's Leadership in Educational Administration: Representation and Barriers

Although women make up a substantial proportion of the teaching workforce, particularly at primary and secondary levels, they remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions in higher education. This gap is not a reflection of limited competence or qualifications but rather the result of systemic, cultural, and institutional constraints that hinder their advancement. Such disparities raise concerns about equity, governance, and institutional effectiveness, especially in developing contexts where leadership significantly influences educational quality and sustainability (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2023; Oplatka & Arar, 2022).

Career advancement in educational administration is shaped by organizational structures, promotion practices, informal networks, and prevailing gender norms. Women often encounter slower promotion rates, restricted access to strategic roles, and exclusion from influential decision-making spaces, even when equally qualified. Addressing this imbalance requires structural reforms, transparent promotion systems, and gender-responsive leadership development strategies to support sustained representation (Morley, 2022).

Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Women's Leadership

Understanding women's representation and advancement in educational administration requires theoretical lenses that expose structural, cultural, and organizational influences on leadership access. These frameworks clarify the obstacles women face, the routes they take into leadership, and approaches for achieving equity (Blackmore, 2023).

Transformational Leadership Theory

Developed by Burns (1978) and later refined by Bass (1985), Transformational Leadership Theory highlights leadership rooted in vision, motivation, collaboration, and individualized support rather than rigid authority. This approach aligns with leadership styles frequently associated with women in education, such as mentoring and participatory decision-making. However, such competencies are often undervalued in systems that privilege traditionally masculine leadership norms, sustaining gender imbalances in senior roles (Morley, 2022; Blackmore, 2023).

Social Role Theory

Eagly's (1987) Social Role Theory explains how socially constructed expectations assign communal traits to women and agentic traits to men. In educational administration, these stereotypes contribute to both horizontal and vertical segregation, where women are concentrated in supportive or mid-level roles and less frequently perceived as suitable for top leadership. Such expectations shape hiring and promotion processes, reinforcing career barriers (Arar & Oplatka, 2022).

Gendered Organizations Theory

Acker (1990) argues that organizations are inherently gendered, structured in ways that privilege masculine norms. Recruitment practices, evaluation systems, and informal networks often favor men, creating systemic barriers for women. In educational leadership, these patterns sustain the glass ceiling and limit equal representation (Morley, 2022; Arar & Oplatka, 2022).

Intersectionality Framework

Crenshaw's (1989) concept of intersectionality emphasizes that gender intersects with race, class, ethnicity, and other identities to produce layered disadvantages. This perspective explains why leadership barriers are more pronounced for some women and highlights the need for inclusive, context-sensitive policies in educational administration (Arar & Oplatka, 2022; Morley, 2022).

Educational Administration

Educational administration refers to the systematic planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling of resources and activities within educational institutions to achieve objectives effectively (Bush, 2022). It encompasses managing human, financial, and material resources to facilitate teaching, learning, and research, ensuring alignment with national education policies and societal expectations. Leadership is central to educational administration, guiding institutions, making strategic decisions, and fostering environments conducive to academic excellence, innovation, and accountability (Hoy & Miskel, 2023).

Beyond resource management, educational administration involves policy implementation, curriculum oversight, staff development, and stakeholder engagement. Administrators create organizational structures that promote collaboration, equity, and educational quality. Effective administration combines managerial competencies, leadership skills, and contextual understanding of sociocultural, economic, and political factors influencing educational outcomes. Integrating these elements ensures that schools, colleges, and universities operate efficiently, achieve goals, and adapt to evolving educational challenges (Bush, 2022; Hoy & Miskel, 2023).

Women's Representation in Educational Administration

Women's representation in educational administration reflects the extent to which women occupy formal leadership and decision-making roles, including positions such as head teachers, principals, deans, registrars, provosts, and vice chancellors. Representation encompasses both numerical presence and hierarchical positioning, emphasizing that meaningful inclusion requires women to hold senior roles with strategic authority. Without equitable access to top decision-making positions, women's influence over policy, resource allocation, and institutional direction remains limited (Morley, 2022; Blackmore, 2023).

Despite women constituting a majority of the global education workforce, their representation in senior leadership is disproportionately low. UNESCO (2023) reports that women make up over 60% of teachers worldwide but occupy less than 35% of top leadership roles in higher education. Similar trends are evident in school leadership, where women more frequently hold deputy or assistant positions rather than principal or executive roles. These patterns reflect vertical gender segregation, driven by gendered promotion practices, institutional culture, and leadership norms rather than differences in qualifications or performance. Improving women's representation necessitates intentional institutional reforms that enhance transparency, accountability, and equity in leadership selection and promotion processes (UNESCO, 2023).

Patterns of Women's Representation in Educational Administration

Women remain underrepresented in senior educational leadership despite dominating the teaching workforce. While they are prevalent in entry- and mid-level roles, they occupy fewer top positions with strategic decision-making authority. Examining vertical, horizontal, and regional patterns of representation helps identify structural barriers and design interventions for gender equity (UNESCO, 2023; Blackmore, 2023).

Vertical Segregation: Women make up over 60% of teachers globally but hold less than 35% of top administrative roles, such as principals, deans, and vice chancellors (UNESCO, 2023). This gap shows that numerical majority does not guarantee leadership influence (Blackmore, 2023).

Horizontal Segregation: Women are often concentrated in roles related to student welfare or curriculum coordination, while men dominate departments linked to research, finance, and strategy (Arar & Oplatka, 2022). Such clustering limits exposure to decision-making critical for senior leadership.

Regional Variations: Representation varies across regions. In sub-Saharan Africa, women hold fewer than 25% of senior leadership roles due to cultural expectations and biased promotion practices (Deem & Morley, 2023). In parts of Asia and the Middle East, gender equity policies often exist in principle but are poorly implemented (Arar & Oplatka, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).

Increasing women's presence alone is insufficient for equity; institutional reforms—transparent promotion, leadership development, and gender-sensitive succession planning—are essential (Morley, 2022; Blackmore, 2023).

Career Progression in Educational Administration

Career progression involves moving from entry- or mid-level roles to senior administrative positions. For women, progression is shaped by formal structures—promotion criteria, tenure, performance evaluations—and informal factors such as mentorship, networks, and institutional culture. Advancement is often slower for women due to systemic biases, despite comparable qualifications and experience (Morley, 2022; Arar & Oplatka, 2022).

Barriers include biased promotion practices, limited access to influential networks, work–family expectations, and exclusion from strategic opportunities. Women frequently plateau at middle-management levels, while men advance more rapidly, reinforcing the glass ceiling. Addressing these gaps requires transparent promotion systems, structured leadership development, and institutional accountability (UNESCO, 2023).

The Glass Ceiling in Educational Administration

The glass ceiling represents invisible systemic barriers that restrict women's advancement to higher roles. Key factors include:

1. ***Vertical Gender Segregation:*** Women dominate lower and mid-level roles but are underrepresented in executive positions (UNESCO, 2023; Morley, 2022).
2. ***Cultural Norms:*** Leadership traits like assertiveness are often coded as masculine, marginalizing competent women (Blackmore, 2023; Arar & Oplatka, 2022).
3. ***Institutional Practices:*** Promotion often relies on informal networks and subjective criteria favoring men (Deem & Morley, 2023; Blackmore, 2023).
4. ***Work–Life Balance:*** Caregiving responsibilities and inflexible policies limit women's access to leadership opportunities (Morley, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).
5. ***Leadership Development Access:*** Women have fewer opportunities for mentorship, training, and executive sponsorship, slowing their career progression (Arar & Oplatka, 2022; Blackmore, 2023).

Leadership Pathways in Educational Administration

Leadership pathways—both formal (promotion systems, leadership programmes, succession planning) and informal (mentorship, networks, visibility)—shape access to administrative roles. These pathways are not gender neutral; organizational cultures influence who is deemed "leadership material" (Morley, 2022; Blackmore, 2023).

Women's access is often constrained by exclusion from networks, limited mentorship, and inequitable leadership training. Many are placed in temporary or support roles, while men are fast-tracked through strategic assignments (Arar & Oplatka, 2022; Deem & Morley, 2023). Without intentional restructuring, transparent succession planning, and accountability, leadership pathways reproduce gender hierarchies rather than equitable opportunities (UNESCO, 2023).

Leadership Pathways and Access to Administrative Authority

Leadership pathways in educational administration encompass the formal and informal routes through which individuals gain access to, prepare for, and advance within leadership roles in schools, colleges, and universities. These pathways determine not only who becomes eligible for administrative positions but also who has the opportunity to exercise decision-making authority. Evidence shows that

these pathways are highly gendered, with structural and cultural factors often privileging men over women, limiting women's progression to senior leadership (Blackmore, 2023; Morley, 2022).

1. **Formal Leadership Pathways:** Formal pathways include structured promotion criteria, tenure and appointment systems, leadership development programmes, and executive training. Candidates typically progress through defined stages, such as moving from classroom teaching to middle management, then to senior administrative roles. However, these systems often favor uninterrupted career trajectories, which can disadvantage women who experience career breaks due to caregiving responsibilities. Research indicates that promotion committees may undervalue experiences outside these linear paths, thereby restricting women's access to executive roles (Arar & Oplatka, 2022; Deem & Morley, 2023).
2. **Informal Leadership Pathways:** Informal pathways are equally critical and include mentorship, sponsorship, networking, and inclusion in strategic institutional projects. Men are often more likely to benefit from these informal mechanisms, gaining visibility, advocacy from senior leaders, and access to high-stakes assignments that accelerate their progression. Women's limited access to these networks reduces their opportunities to demonstrate leadership readiness and hinders advancement to positions of authority (Arar & Oplatka, 2022; Blackmore, 2023).

Table 1: *Formal and Informal Leadership Pathways in Educational Administration.*

Leadership Pathways	Components/ Mechanisms	Examples	Characteristics	Gendered Access Considerations
Formal Pathways	Promotion through hierarchical roles. Tenure or appointment systems. Leadership development programmes. Succession planning	Teacher → Deputy Principal → Principal. Dean or Provost appointment. Executive leadership training. Institutional succession plans.	Structured and policy-driven. Evaluated by formal criteria-Transparent on paper	Often favours linear, uninterrupted careers Career breaks (e.g., caregiving) can disadvantage women. Promotion criteria may undervalue non-traditional experiences
Informal Pathways	Mentorship and sponsorship. Professional networks	Senior leaders advocating for promotion Inclusion in strategic	Relational and socially mediated. Often unstructured and context dependent	Women have limited access to male-dominated networks- Mentorship

Leadership Pathways	Components/ Mechanisms	Examples	Characteristics	Gendered Access Considerations
	Participation in high-profile projects/ committees Institutional visibility and reputation	committees Leading flagship programmes Recognition for contributions to institutional initiatives	Requires visibility and networking	opportunities may be fewer- Informal biases can restrict recognition and advancement opportunities

Source: Researcher, 2026.

Institutional Policies, Leadership Development, and Gender Responsiveness

Institutional policies and leadership development initiatives play a critical role in shaping women's access to and progression within educational administration. Policies that are gender-responsive ensure equitable opportunities for recruitment, promotion, and professional development, while leadership development programmes prepare potential leaders to navigate institutional challenges effectively. Without intentional policy design and implementation, women's underrepresentation in senior administrative roles persists, despite their qualifications and experience (Morley, 2022; Blackmore, 2023).

- ***Gender-Responsive Institutional Policies:*** Gender-responsive policies are formal rules, procedures, and frameworks that explicitly aim to reduce barriers to women's leadership. Examples include transparent promotion and selection criteria for administrative roles, affirmative action or quota systems to increase women's representation in senior leadership, and work–life balance policies, including flexible schedules, parental leave, and childcare support.

Empirical evidence shows that institutions with well-implemented gender-responsive policies demonstrate higher proportions of women in leadership roles. However, in many contexts, policies exist only on paper and are poorly enforced, limiting their impact on actual leadership composition (UNESCO, 2023; Arar & Oplatka, 2022).

- ***Leadership Development Programmes:*** Leadership development initiatives equip emerging leaders with the skills, knowledge, and networks necessary to advance in educational administration. These programmes can include executive training and certification programmes, structured mentorship and sponsorship schemes, and strategic project assignments and experiential learning opportunities.

Studies indicate that when women have access to leadership development programmes tailored to their needs, including recognition of career interruptions or non-linear trajectories, they are more likely to progress into senior leadership positions (Deem & Morley, 2023; Blackmore, 2023).

- ***Integration of Gender Responsiveness in Leadership Development:*** Gender-responsive leadership development goes beyond equal access; it actively

addresses systemic barriers, biases, and stereotypes that limit women's advancement. This includes designing mentorship programmes that pair women with senior advocates, ensuring leadership training addresses negotiation, strategic decision-making, and visibility within institutional networks, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of leadership initiatives in promoting women's career progression.

When gender responsiveness is integrated into leadership development and institutional policies, women gain both the skills and opportunities required to access senior positions, reducing the effects of the glass ceiling and improving institutional governance (Morley, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).

Implications for Educational Administration Practice and Policy

The analysis of women's representation, career progression, and leadership pathways in educational administration carries significant implications for both leadership practice and policy formulation. Persistent underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions, despite their majority presence in teaching and mid-level administrative roles, highlights systemic inequities that require targeted interventions. Addressing these gaps is essential not only for gender equity but also for enhancing institutional effectiveness, governance, and innovation in educational settings (Morley, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).

1. ***Policy Implications:*** Educational institutions and governing bodies must develop and enforce **gender-responsive policies** that promote equitable access to leadership. Key strategies include:
   - **Transparent promotion and appointment processes**, ensuring that criteria for advancement are clear, merit-based, and monitored for bias.
   - **Affirmative action measures or quotas** to accelerate women's representation in senior leadership positions.
   - **Work–life balance policies**, such as flexible schedules, parental leave, and institutional childcare support, to reduce career interruptions and support women's leadership progression.
   - **Monitoring and accountability mechanisms** to assess the effectiveness of gender equity policies in practice (Arar & Oplatka, 2022; Blackmore, 2023).
2. ***Leadership Practice Implications:*** Leaders in educational institutions must adopt **inclusive and gender-sensitive practices** that foster equitable opportunities for career development:

- **Structured mentorship and sponsorship programmes** to guide women through leadership pathways and provide advocacy for senior roles.
- **Leadership development initiatives** that address gender-specific barriers, recognize non-linear career trajectories, and equip women with strategic decision-making skills.
- **Inclusive organizational culture** that challenges gender stereotypes and promotes diverse leadership styles.

- **Active engagement in networking opportunities**, ensuring women have access to the informal pathways that influence promotion and visibility (Deem & Morley, 2023; Morley, 2022).

3. *Broader Implications:* Enhancing women's representation and access to leadership in educational administration carries implications that extend well beyond individual career advancement. As Jill Blackmore (2023) explains, these broader effects intersect across institutional, organizational, policy, workforce, and societal dimensions.

i. Institutional Effectiveness and Decision-Making: Gender-diverse leadership teams strengthen institutional effectiveness because they integrate multiple perspectives, reduce the risk of group-think, and promote more balanced deliberations; moreover, women leaders frequently adopt collaborative and participatory governance styles that support inclusive policies and responsive practices, thereby enabling institutions to address complex challenges such as curriculum reform, equitable resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement more effectively (Blackmore, 2023; Louise Morley, 2022).

ii. Organizational Culture and Equity: Increased female representation in leadership cultivates a culture of inclusion and fairness by signaling that authority and advancement are not gender-bound, while women in senior roles simultaneously function as mentors and visible role models who inspire other women and girls to pursue leadership pathways; in addition, gender-balanced leadership disrupts entrenched stereotypes about leadership traits and organizational power, gradually reshaping institutional norms and expectations.

iii. Policy Development and Strategic Planning: Women leaders enrich policy development and strategic planning by introducing perspectives that foreground equity, social justice, and holistic student development, and their active participation in strategic decision-making ensures that institutional policies reflect diverse experiences and needs, thereby strengthening governance processes and long-term planning outcomes.

iv. Workforce Development and Retention: The visibility of women in leadership positions enhances workforce stability because it demonstrates attainable career progression routes for female professionals, and expanded leadership opportunities encourage motivation, professional growth, and job satisfaction, which collectively improve staff performance and reinforce institutional capacity over time.

v. Societal and Community Impact: Educational institutions guided by gender-diverse leadership teams model principles of equity and inclusivity for the wider community, and by promoting women's leadership in education, they contribute to broader societal objectives of gender equality, empowerment, and sustainable development, consistent with global commitments such as United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality.

Strategies for Equitable Leadership Access

Achieving equitable access to leadership positions in educational administration requires coordinated efforts that confront structural, institutional, and cultural barriers. Women's limited representation in senior roles is not simply a matter of individual aspiration, but a reflection of systemic inequalities embedded in promotion systems, leadership pathways, and organizational norms (Morley, 2022; Blackmore, 2023). Sustainable progress therefore demands integrated policy reforms, leadership development, and cultural transformation.

1. ***Transparent and Gender-Responsive Promotion Systems:*** Institutions should implement clear, merit-based promotion criteria that recognize non-linear career paths and account for caregiving or maternity-related interruptions. Regular monitoring of selection processes helps reduce bias and ensures fair evaluation for all candidates (Arar & Oplatka, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).
2. ***Structured Mentorship and Sponsorship:*** Formal mentorship builds skills and confidence, while sponsorship ensures advocacy and access to high-level opportunities. Women who benefit from structured support are more likely to attain senior leadership roles and navigate informal networks effectively (Blackmore, 2023; Deem & Morley, 2023).
3. ***Leadership Development and Capacity Building:*** Targeted programmes should provide executive training, experiential learning, and exposure to governance processes. Such initiatives must address systemic barriers, including limited visibility and gender bias, while accommodating diverse career trajectories (Morley, 2022; Arar & Oplatka, 2022).
4. ***Inclusive Organizational Culture:*** Institutions must cultivate cultures that value diverse leadership styles and challenge gender stereotypes. Fair allocation of high-visibility tasks and inclusive decision-making structures can weaken the glass ceiling and encourage women's advancement (Blackmore, 2023; UNESCO, 2023).
5. ***Monitoring and Accountability:*** Regular collection of gender-disaggregated data on promotions and leadership participation strengthens transparency and policy enforcement, ensuring that equity measures produce measurable outcomes (Morley, 2022; Arar & Oplatka, 2022).
6. ***Research and Policy Dialogue:*** Ongoing research and collaborative policy discussions among governments and educational institutions are essential for developing evidence-based strategies tailored to specific contexts (UNESCO, 2023).

Conclusion

Despite women's strong presence in teaching and mid-level roles, their advancement to senior leadership positions remains constrained by structural and cultural barriers, including vertical segregation and the persistent glass ceiling (Morley, 2022; Blackmore, 2023). Numerical representation alone does not guarantee equitable access; intentional and systemic reforms are required. Transparent promotion systems, mentorship and sponsorship, targeted leadership

development, inclusive cultures, and robust accountability mechanisms are vital to expanding women's leadership opportunities. Beyond promoting fairness, these strategies enhance institutional governance, innovation, and social impact (Arar & Oplatka, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Advancing women's leadership in education is therefore both a moral responsibility and a strategic necessity, requiring continued research, policy commitment, and institutional reform.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP: CHALLENGES AND POLICY OPTIONS

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Introduction

Effectiveness, creativity, and sustainability in technical education institutions are all significantly influenced by leadership. Systems of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) are essential to economic growth, workforce development, and technological adaptability. Curriculum relevance, staff development, governance quality, and industry participation are all impacted by leadership in these institutions (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022). Leadership in education is expected to be based on qualification, competence and technical know-how without recourse to gender sentiments or bias. However, in developing countries such as Nigeria, leadership in educational institutions is negatively skewed as it is purely gender insensitive.

Women are still underrepresented in educational leadership, especially at executive levels, despite international commitmentsto gender equality (UNESCO, 2025). According to Meza-Mejía et al. (2023), the main obstacles to women's leadership promotion are institutional and structural issues rather than individual ability. Diversity in leadership enhances institutional responsiveness, decision-making quality, and organizational effectiveness (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2010; Gümüş et al., 2021). This chapterexamines institutional and legislative solutions for fostering inclusive leadership as well as obstacles to women's leadership in technical education.

Importance of Leadership in Technical Education

Beyond administrative duties, leadership in technical education institutions encompasses strategic planning, curriculum innovation, quality assurance, and collaboration with external stakeholders and industry. Training programmes are in line with national development aims and labour market demands when effective leadership is in place (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022). organizational culture, employee motivation, and institutional adaptability are all improved by inclusive leadership (Arar &Oplatka, 2022; Gümüş et al., 2021). By integrating a variety of viewpoints, gender-equitable leadership improves institutional efficacy and decision-making (Alsham, 2025; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2010).

Persistent Gender Imbalance in Technical Education Leadership

Although women are underrepresented in high leadership positions like directors, principals, and executives, they are frequently well-represented in teaching and mid-level administrative jobs (UNESCO, 2025). Because technical subjects have historically been associated with masculinity, this disparity is more noticeable in technical education. Recruitment, promotion, and selection procedures are impacted by gendered views of technical proficiency and leadership ability (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022). Women's underrepresentation is explained by structural hurdles rather than personal shortcomings, underscoring the necessity of intentional institutional and policy reforms (Gümüş et al., 2021; ILO, 2019; Meza-Mejía et al., 2023).

Gender Barriers in Technical Education Leadership

Women who want to hold leadership roles in technical education institutions must overcome a number of interrelated obstacles that operate at the institutional, socio-cultural, and policy levels.

Socio-Cultural Expectations: Expectations about leadership suitability are still shaped by socio-cultural norms. Perceptions of women's availability and dedication to leadership jobs are impacted by the expectation that they prioritise household and caring duties. These norms are major barriers to women's leadership advancement, according to global labour and education studies (UNESCO, 2023).

Gender Stereotyping in Technical Fields: Stereotypes that doubt women's technical proficiency and leadership potential are reinforced by the perception that technical education is a male-dominated field. These misconceptions impede women's visibility in decision-making spaces and discourage aspirations for leadership (Arar &Oplatka, 2022; Gümüş et al., 2021).

Institutional Bias: Through unofficial networks, arbitrary leadership standards, and unclear promotion procedures, institutional cultures and practices frequently favour men. These organizational biases perpetuate male dominance in governance systems and restrict women's access to leadership opportunities (ILO, 2019; Meza-Mejía et al., 2023).

Limited Leadership Development and Mentorship: To prepare people for leadership positions, mentorship and leadership development are crucial. However, formal leadership training, mentorship, and sponsorship possibilities are often inaccessible to women at technical education institutions. According to and Arar and Oplatka (2022); Grogan and Shakeshaft (2010), mentoring is crucial for women to grow in leadership roles, but it is still not properly institutionalised in many educational institutions.

Work–Life Balance Constraints: In technical education institutes, leadership roles are sometimes rigid and time-consuming. Women are disproportionately affected by the absence of family-friendly policies and flexible work schedules, which

contributes to underrepresentation and leadership turnover (Tushabe et al., 2025; UNESCO, 2023).

Policy Gaps and Weak Implementation: Many educational systems have gender equity policies, although they are frequently poorly implemented. Gender disparity in leadership is sustained by policy-practice gaps caused by inadequate monitoring, a lack of accountability mechanisms, and a lack of institutional commitment (UNESCO-UNECO, 2022; UNESCO, 2025).

Policy and Institutional Options for Breaking Gender Barriers

Addressing gender imbalance in technical education leadership requires coordinated and sustained policy and institutional action.

Gender-Responsive Leadership Policies: Institutions should create and implement gender-responsive leadership guidelines that support inclusive governance and fair representation. Institutional commitment to gender equity is strengthened by specific goals and accountability structures.

Transparent and Inclusive Leadership Appointment Processes: Procedures for choosing leaders should be open, inclusive, and based on merit. According to research, diversified selection committees and well-defined criteria improve fairness and lessen bias in leadership selections (Arar &Oplatka, 2022; Meza-Mejía et al., 2023).

Leadership Capacity Building: Programmes for focused leadership development improve women's preparedness for leadership positions. Research indicates that structured leadership training enhances women in education's competence, confidence, and effectiveness as leaders (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2010; ILO, 2019).

Mentorship and Professional Programme: Through professional visibility, advocacy, and assistance, formal mentorship and sponsorship programmes help women advance in their careers. Mentorship is a crucial route for women's leadership advancement in school, according to recent empirical data (Arar &Oplatka, 2022).

Institutional Culture Reform and Gender Mainstreaming: Reforming institutional culture is necessary for long-term change. Equity concerns are included in daily operations through gender mainstreaming across policies, practices, and institutional planning (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022).

Monitoring and Accountability: Accountability is improved, and progress toward equity targets is sustained by regular monitoring of gender representation in leadership roles and the use of performance indicators.

Consequences for the Development of Technical Education

The advancement of technical education is significantly impacted by gender-equitable leadership. Diverse leadership groups foster creativity, strengthen institutional governance, and make better decisions(Arar &Oplatka, 2022; Gümüş, et al., 2010). Additionally, inclusive leadership offers role models that promote

increased female participation in technical education growth (ILO, 2019; UNESCO, 2025).

Additionally, promoting gender parity in leadership promotes more general development goals, including social justice, workforce inclusion, and sustainable economic growth. Technical education institutions' ability to significantly contribute to national and international development goals is strengthened by addressing leadership inequality.

The Way Forward

Considering the need for gender parity and equality in TVET institutions, this chapter provided possible pathways for achievement women meaningful representation in leadership roles.

1. Government should adopt and implement gender-responsive policies that will guarantee that women have equal access to leadership roles, and that organisations should put in place explicit rules with quantifiable goals and accountability systems. These could serve as chech-valves to gender insensitivity in leadership appointmen/ selection.
2. To prepare women for higher positions and to increase their visibility, self-assurance, and professional networks, organised training and mentorship programmes should be offered. This will boost mentorship and leadership development and ehance women opportunities to getting to the top in the executive cadre of the leadership rung in education.
3. Educational institutions should incorporate gender equity into organizational procedures, fostering conditions free from prejudice and support that allow women to succeed in leadership roles. Thus, inclusive institutional culture should be encouraged at all levels of education, particularly, TVET oriented institutions.

Conclusion

Rather than being a reflection of women's shortcomings, the persistent gender disparity in technical education leadership is a result of institutional prejudice, deeply ingrained socio-cultural norms, and poor policy implementation. Gender stereotypes, a lack of opportunity for leadership development, and limitations on work-life balance are some of the major obstacles to women's advancement that have been noted in this chapter.

To achieve gender-equitable leadership, it has also emphasised institutional and policy methods such as mentorship programmes, open appointment procedures, building leadership capacity, and institutional culture reform. Encouraging inclusive leadership is crucial for improving governance, innovation, and the general efficacy of technical education institutions, in addition to advancing gender equity. Therefore, to break down structural barriers and guarantee equitable leadership opportunities for women, policymakers and institutional leaders must remain committed.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

GENDER EQUITY AND LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION: NAVIGATING CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Introduction

Learning outcomes, policy implementation, and institutional culture are all implicitly influenced by educational leadership. Gender equity has gained attention due to worries about who runs educational institutions and whose opinions matter when making decisions. In the global pursuit of inclusive and efficient governance within educational institutions, gender equity in educational leadership continues to be a crucial problem. In addition to influencing practice and policy, educational leadership also affects student outcomes, staff morale, and the learning environment.

Education systems around the world mirror larger social injustices, with men frequently holding a disproportionate number of leadership roles. In Nigeria, leadership roles at all educational levels, especially tertiary levels, seem to continue to be disproportionately held by men, despite increased access to education for women. Ogunyemi (2020), who claimed that although women make up a sizable share of the teaching workforce, they are still under-represented in high leadership positions, supports this viewpoint. In a similar vein, UNESCO (2019) reported that less than 30% of leadership positions in education globally are held by women, a figure that highlights the ongoing gender disparity. This discrepancy draws attention to structural obstacles that prevent women from rising to positions of leadership despite their proven ability and dedication.

This paradox poses important questions on power, equity, and the effectiveness of leadership. According to Eagly and Carli, (2007) and Northouse, (2021), inclusive leadership improves democratic governance and organizational effectiveness. International agreements like the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), which emphasise leadership as a crucial area for action, highlight the necessity of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (UN Women, 2020). Equal chances in educational leadership are also promoted by Nigeria's National Policy on Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013), although there are still implementation problems. This chapter places gender

equality in the context of current leadership discourse, highlighting its importance for social justice, national development, and educational excellence.

Conceptual Explanations: Leadership Dynamics, Gender, and Equity

Clear conceptual differences between gender, equity, and leadership dynamics are necessary for the discussion of gender equity in educational leadership. The socially constructed roles, expectations, and relationships that are allocated to men and women within particular cultural contexts are referred to as gender. Gender is a social construct that goes beyond biological distinctions to include the duties, actions, and expectations that society places on people according to their sex (Connell, 2009). In contrast to equality, equity emphasises justice and fairness in the allocation of opportunities and resources, acknowledging that different people or groups may need different forms of support to attain comparable results (Fraser, 2008). Therefore, eliminating structural obstacles and establishing favourable circumstances for equitable participation are necessary to achieve gender equity in educational leadership. Equity in educational leadership means fostering conditions that allow historically under-represented groups, especially women, to assume leadership positions without prejudice or institutional barriers.

Patterns of power, influence, and interaction within organisations are described by leadership dynamics. Leithwood et al. (2020) define leadership dynamics as the intricate relationships, power dynamics, and organizational structures that influence who assumes leadership roles and how leadership is exercised. Gender relations and equity are directly impacted by institutional policies, practices, and outcomes that are shaped by leadership in education (Bush & Oduro, 2006). Social conventions that frequently favour masculine leadership qualities and marginalise feminine methods have a profoundly gendered impact on these dynamics (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women's leadership paths are constrained by gendered expectations in Nigerian educational leadership, which is ingrained in a patriarchal environment (Akinboye, 2012). Therefore, understanding how gendered norms interact with leadership processes to either promote or impede fair leadership representation requires conceptual clarity.

Gender Equity in Educational Leadership: A Theoretical Perspective

Diverse theoretical frameworks that clarify the causes underlying gendered inequities enhance gender equity in educational leadership. In order to promote equal rights and opportunities, feminist theories especially liberal feminism emphasizes the eradication of institutional and legal barriers to women's leadership (Tong, 2009). Radical feminist viewpoints demand fundamental social change and criticise the patriarchal systems that uphold male supremacy in leadership (Walby, 1990). These theories offer a basis for comprehending how gender disparities in education are systemic.

Gender disparities in leadership, according to social role theory, result from socially constructed roles and stereotypes that dictate communal behaviour for women and agentic behaviour for males, impacting leadership perceptions and selection (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Because it takes into account the overlapping effects of gender, ethnicity, class, and religion on women's leadership experiences, intersectionality theory is especially important in the Nigerian setting (Crenshaw, 1991; Adekola & Sergi, 2017). This strategy draws attention to the various obstacles that Nigerian women leaders must overcome, calling for sophisticated policy and practice solutions.

Additionally, by emphasising inclusivity, teamwork, and change-oriented strategies that support gender equity objectives, transformational leadership theory provides a prism through which to rethink leadership beyond conventional masculine patterns (Bass & Riggio, 2006). A thorough grasp of the many opportunities and obstacles in promoting gender equity in educational leadership both internationally and in Nigeria is made possible by combining these theoretical viewpoints.

Institutional and Policy Frameworks for Gender Equity

Policy and institutional frameworks intended to foster diversity and correct historical injustices have a considerable impact on the pursuit of gender parity in educational leadership. International frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5 on gender equality) and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) set normative standards that compel member states to incorporate gender equity into educational leadership policies (UN Women, 2020). These frameworks direct national initiatives and give governments accountability tools to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions.

Affirmative action and gender-sensitive leadership development programmes are specifically recommended by Nigerian policy efforts like the National Gender Policy (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2006) and the National Policy on Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). However, because of institutional inaction, sociocultural opposition, and resource limitations, the implementation of these policies is still inconsistent (Olutola & Olaniyan, 2016). Gender differences in leadership nominations remain because institutional frameworks in educational institutions frequently lack effective gender mainstreaming processes (Aina, 2018).

Furthermore, patriarchal attitudes that hinder women's participation in leadership are often reflected in institutional cultures and governance structures in Nigerian educational contexts (Ogunyemi, 2021). Therefore, institutional changes that support open hiring, mentorship programmes, and gender-responsive capacity building must be added to policy frameworks (Adeyemi, 2019). International research highlights the significance of intersectional policy approaches that

acknowledge the varied experiences of female leaders and promote multi-level interventions that tackle structural obstacles (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Adekola & Sergi, 2017). Therefore, strong institutional and regulatory frameworks can be crucial levers for achieving gender parity in educational leadership when they are properly implemented and overseen.

Gender Representation in Educational Leadership: Historical Trends

A historical analysis of gender representation in educational leadership indicates long-standing inequalities that have changed over time due to sociopolitical and cultural influences in Nigeria and around the world. As a reflection of larger gendered power disparities in society, educational leadership has historically been dominated by men (Walker, 2011). In many civilisations, women were assigned to supportive or subservient roles, reflecting patriarchal cultural systems, while men were given leadership positions in school (Acker, 2006).

Colonial educational systems in Nigeria perpetuated gender hierarchies by limiting women's access to leadership roles and favouring male leadership (Ogunyemi, 2021). Although post-independence educational reforms aimed to increase girls' access to education, there was still a disparity in leadership representation. Despite rising female enrolment in teacher education programmes, studies show that women in Nigerian educational leadership roles, such as principals, deans, and directors, have consistently been under-represented throughout the 20th and 21st centuries (Olaniyan & Olaniyan, 2015). This assertion is inconsistent with the reality of leadership roles in Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba, Delta State, where majority of the Principal Officers of the institutions, Deans, Directors and Head of Departments are female during the leadership (2019-2025) of Prof. (Mrs) Josephine E. Anene-Okeakwa.

Increased awareness and support for women's leadership in education were sparked by worldwide gender equality programmes and feminist movements starting in the 1970s (Eagly & Carli, 2007). However, progress has been gradual, and women frequently encounter the "glass ceiling" phenomenon, an imperceptible barrier that prevents them from rising to positions of high leadership (Cotter et al., 2001). Women's leadership paths in Nigeria have been hindered by the confluence of institutional prejudices, gender stereotypes, and cultural expectations (Akinboye, 2012).

Gender Equity in Educational Leadership: Current Obstacles

Current obstacles to gender parity in educational leadership continue to exist both internationally and in Nigeria, despite regulatory advancements and increased awareness. These obstacles are a reflection of deeply ingrained institutional, structural, and sociocultural impediments. The continuation of gender stereotypes that link leadership to masculine qualities like aggressiveness and decisiveness, which frequently marginalise women's leadership styles seen as relational or communal, is one significant issue (Eagly & Carli, 2007). According to Leithwood et

al. (2020), these prejudices have an impact on employment, promotion, and evaluation procedures, resulting in biases that prevent women from achieving leadership positions.

In Nigeria, patriarchal cultural norms that value men's authority and cast doubt on women's validity as leaders aggravate these gendered expectations (Akinboye, 2012). The authority and efficacy of female leaders are often undermined by opposition from male coworkers, parents, and communities (Ogunyemi, 2021). Furthermore, women in leadership positions frequently have to juggle job obligations with household and caregiving responsibilities; this difficulty is made worse by insufficient institutional support, such as flexible work schedules or childcare options (Olutola & Olaniyan, 2016).

Other institutional obstacles include unclear hiring procedures, a dearth of mentorship, and restricted access to chances for women-specific professional development (Adeyemi, 2019). Additionally, gender-based harassment and discrimination in educational institutions continue to go unaddressed, resulting in hostile environments that discourage women from pursuing or maintaining leadership positions (Aina, 2018).

The obstacles faced by women leaders are made worse by intersectional issues on a global scale, as gender interacts with race, class, and other identities, underscoring the need for different approaches (Crenshaw, 1991). Systemic changes that eliminate patriarchal norms, enact gender-sensitive policies, and promote inclusive institutional cultures that support diverse leadership are necessary to address these modern issues.

Gender Power Relations and Leadership Dynamics

Access, authority, and influence are shaped by gendered power relations that are intricately linked to leadership dynamics in educational institutions. In leadership, power is relational as well as positional; it involves negotiating authority in the face of institutional systems and social conventions that often favour masculinity (Acker, 2006). Both overt and covert manifestations of gendered power relations affect who is seen as a legitimate leader and how leadership is conducted. In educational settings, female leadership is frequently portrayed as emotional, caring, or less authoritative, while male leadership has historically been linked to authority, reason, and control (Eagly & Carli, 2007). These dichotomies restrict women's leadership agency and uphold gender hierarchies.

These dynamics are worsened in Nigeria by deeply ingrained patriarchal norms that give men excessive authority in both the public and private domains (Akinboye, 2012). In order to be accepted, women in leadership roles frequently encounter opposition or are forced to adopt masculine leadership philosophies; this phenomenon is known as "role incongruity" (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Women's effectiveness and wellbeing may be harmed by this conflict between gender norms and genuine leadership expression. Additionally, women may be excluded from crucial

decision-making areas by male-dominated leadership networks and unofficial power structures, hence sustaining gendered disparities (Ogunyemi, 2021).

International research emphasises that in order to change gendered power relations, hegemonic masculinities must be challenged and inclusive, collaborative, and relational leadership models must be promoted (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Therefore, in order to eliminate gendered power disparities and foster workplaces where a variety of leadership styles are acknowledged and appreciated, Nigerian educational institutions must critically examine their cultures, policies, and practices. By utilising the whole range of leadership skills, this kind of change is crucial for improving educational outcomes as well as equity.

Nigerian Contextual Realities and Intersectionality

The idea of intersectionality offers a crucial analytical framework for comprehending how contextual elements and overlapping social identities influence gender equity in Nigerian educational leadership. Intersectionality, a term first used by Crenshaw in 1991, highlights the fact that gender cannot be studied in isolation from other identification markers like ethnicity, class, religion, and geography, all of which have a big impact on women's leadership experiences. These overlapping identities present a variety of obstacles that are frequently made worse for women who want to hold leadership positions in Nigeria's complicated sociocultural environment.

For instance, compared to their peers from dominant groups, women from lower socioeconomic origins or minority ethnic groups may experience greater marginalisation (Adekola & Sergi, 2017). Additionally, religious practices and beliefs interact with gender norms, sometimes strengthening patriarchal systems that restrict women's access to leadership positions, especially in northern Nigeria (Adamu & Ahmed, 2019). Access to leadership paths is further complicated by regional differences in educational development; women in rural areas frequently face more challenges because of scarce resources and sociocultural limitations (Olutola & Olaniyan, 2016).

Furthermore, intersectionality highlights the need for inclusive policies that take into account a range of experiences by highlighting how institutional practices may unintentionally favour some groups of women over others (Aina, 2018). In order to guarantee that interventions reflect the complex circumstances of women leaders, international research promotes intersectional methods in leadership development programmes (Eagly & Carli, 2007). In order to promote more equitable and contextually relevant educational leadership in Nigeria, it is essential to use intersectionality as a guiding paradigm for developing multidimensional methods that acknowledge and address the varied nature of gendered leadership difficulties.

New Prospects for Promoting Gender Equity

Emerging prospects to advance gender equity in educational leadership indicate viable avenues for revolutionary change, despite ongoing obstacles. A favourable climate for advancing women's leadership in education has been established globally through greater lobbying, legislative changes, and international commitments (UN Women, 2020). Practical ways to empower women and increase their participation in leadership positions are provided by the growth of mentorship networks, leadership development programmes, and gender-sensitive capacity building efforts (Leithwood et al., 2020).

Through focused training, scholarships, and advocacy campaigns that question sociocultural norms, a number of governmental and non-governmental organisations in Nigeria have stepped up efforts to support women's leadership (Adeyemi, 2019). In addition to facilitating more networking, information sharing, and mobilisation among female educators, the emergence of digital technology and social media platforms has also contributed to the dismantling of isolation and the development of collective power (Aina, 2018). Furthermore, transformational leadership models that prioritise inclusivity, teamwork, and emotional intelligence; qualities frequently associated with female leaders are becoming more widely acknowledged as being crucial for tackling today's educational challenges (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

These potentials are further enhanced by international collaborations and cross-cultural learning, which offer frameworks and best practices that may be tailored to the Nigerian setting (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Gender-responsive leadership may also be institutionalised by including gender equity objectives into larger educational reforms and leadership succession planning. In order to take advantage of these opportunities, communities, educational institutions, and legislators must remain committed to fostering conditions that support women's leadership and eventually lead to more effective and fair educational systems.

Consequences for Leadership and Educational Policy

The quest of gender parity in educational leadership has significant ramifications for leadership practice and policy development. In order to remove structural and cultural hurdles that prevent women from participating in leadership roles, policies must go beyond simple rhetoric and include concrete, quantifiable methods (Olutola & Olaniyan, 2016). Adopting gender-responsive budgeting, open hiring practices, and affirmative action laws that provide equal opportunity for women in leadership positions are all necessary to achieve this (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). In order to guarantee accountability and advance gender equity objectives, policies should also have procedures for routine monitoring and assessment (Aina, 2018).

However, leadership practice necessitates a paradigm change that challenges ingrained gender stereotypes and values a variety of leadership styles (Eagly & Carli, 2007). In order to create inclusive institutional environments where

women's views are valued and amplified, educational leaders should be trained to identify and reduce gender biases (Bush & Oduro, 2006). Programmes for women-only mentoring and sponsorship help close gaps in networking and professional development, which are essential for rising to positions of leadership (Adeyemi, 2019). In order to improve retention and effectiveness in leadership roles, Nigerian educational institutions should also take into account work-life balance policies that promote women's multiple roles in the home and workplace (Ogunyemi, 2021).

Globally, incorporating gender equity within leadership frameworks supports education as a means of achieving social justice and equality and is consistent with international commitments like the Sustainable Development Goals (UN Women, 2020). In the end, these policy and practice ramifications highlight the fact that attaining gender parity in educational leadership is not just a question of justice but also a strategic necessity for enhancing educational quality and results through inclusive and varied governance.

Authorial Viewpoint: The Strategic Leadership Imperative of Gender Equity

Gender equity is explicitly positioned in this work as a strategic imperative that is essential to good educational leadership rather than as a side issue. It promotes a revolutionary strategy that incorporates equity into the fundamental duties of leadership and institutional governance, acknowledging the structural basis of gender inequities (Acker, 2006). According to research, gender equity improves decision-making processes by embracing multiple viewpoints, which results in more creative, adaptable, and long-lasting educational outcomes (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Framing gender equality as a leadership imperative challenges dominant patriarchal norms and demands for intentional action to demolish barriers, especially in the Nigerian setting where gendered power disparities are deeply ingrained (Akinboye, 2012). This stance is consistent with feminist leadership theories, which highlight social justice, inclusivity, and teamwork as the cornerstones of effective leadership (Tong, 2009). Additionally, it aligns with intersectional frameworks that demand consideration of the variety of identities and experiences that shape leadership paths (Crenshaw, 1991).

This work encourages policymakers, practitioners, and academics to prioritise equity not only as compliance but as essential to educational performance by placing gender equity at the centre of leadership discourse. Sustained dedication, cultural transformation, and the rethinking of leadership paradigms to embody the principles of equity, diversity, and empowerment are necessary to achieve this.

Prospects for Application

Practically speaking, educational institutions could test new leadership models that incorporate gender equity as a fundamental tenet, such as transformational leadership techniques and participatory governance (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Initiatives to increase capacity must be contextually unique and

address particular obstacles found through stakeholder engagement and empirical study. Additionally, integrating gender equality into leadership development programmes and teacher education curricula will develop future leaders who are dedicated to inclusive practices. To maintain momentum towards equitable educational leadership, future research and practice must ultimately be collaborative and iterative, incorporating communities, educators, and legislators.

Conclusion

In conclusion, an integrated strategy that takes into account historical legacies, current issues, and emerging opportunities is necessary to navigate the intricacies of gender equity and leadership dynamics in education. Particularly in the Nigerian context, the research demonstrates enduring gender differences in educational leadership, which are supported by institutional constraints, sociocultural norms, and gendered power relations (Akinboye, 2012; Ogunyemi, 2021). However, a basis for revolutionary transformation is provided by national and international policy frameworks as well as changing leadership paradigms.

The use of intersectional views highlights the need for complex, situation-specific responses and deepens our awareness of the complex character of women's leadership experiences (Crenshaw, 1991; Adekola & Sergi, 2017). Furthermore, promoting gender equity as a strategic leadership imperative is consistent with the general objectives of sustainable development, social justice, and high-quality education (UN Women, 2020; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Policymakers, educational institutions, and society at large must continue to be committed to realising this vision. This entails putting in place gender-responsive policies, fostering inclusive leadership cultures, and empowering women via capacity building and mentoring (Adeyemi, 2019; Aina, 2018). Although achieving gender parity in educational leadership is a difficult and continuous process, it has the potential to create more just, efficient, and equitable educational systems that can serve the needs of all students if thoughtful, educated action is taken.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

GENDER EQUITY BIAS, LEADERSHIP PRACTICES, AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

Gender equity has become a key focus in global education debates, especially regarding leadership and governance in schools and higher institutions. International frameworks like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight this priority: SDG 4 calls for inclusive, quality education, while SDG 5 emphasizes gender equality and women's empowerment, including leadership roles (UNESCO, 2021). Despite increased access to education for both genders, women remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions worldwide.

This imbalance is not due to individual limitations but stems from structural barriers, patriarchal norms, and institutional practices that hinder women's career advancement (Blackmore, 2013; Morley, 2014; Ogbogu, 2013). In Africa and Nigeria, rigid gender expectations, unequal domestic burdens, and limited mentorship further restrict women's leadership opportunities (Adeleke & Olorunfemi, 2016; Okeke-Ihejirika, 2004). Gender equity bias in educational leadership occurs through discriminatory recruitment and promotion, unequal evaluations, exclusion from decision-making, and stereotypes that associate leadership with masculinity (Acker, 2012; Morley, 2014). Such bias not only limits women's careers but also weakens institutional culture, accountability, and performance (Blackmore, 2013).

Leadership practices shape institutional norms and determine how equity is realized. Inclusive, gender-responsive leadership supports participatory decision-making, collegiality, and improved outcomes for staff and students (Bush, 2020). Conversely, biased leadership results in poor representation, low morale, and weakened quality assurance (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2021; Oyetade, 2019). Equity and quality assurance are therefore intertwined: fair leadership strengthens transparency and resource allocation, while strong quality assurance can reveal gender disparities and guide reforms (Harvey & Green, 2019). Evidence from Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa shows that institutions with inclusive leadership demonstrate better accountability and sustainable quality improvements (Aina & Oloruntoba, 2020; Okeke & Eme, 2018). Thus, integrating gender equity into

leadership is essential for institutional excellence and sustainable educational development.

Conceptual Explication of Key Terms

Gender equity in education has become a major global priority, especially regarding leadership and governance in schools and universities. International frameworks like the UN Sustainable Development Goals highlight this need, with SDG 4 promoting inclusive education and SDG 5 advocating gender equality and women's leadership (UNESCO, 2021). However, despite increased access to education, women remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions worldwide. Studies reveal that although women dominate the teaching workforce, they are often excluded from top leadership due to structural barriers, patriarchal norms, and institutional practices that hinder their advancement, limiting diversity in educational governance (Blackmore, 2013; Morley, 2014; Ogbogu, 2013).

Understanding Gender Equity Bias in Educational Leadership

Gender equity bias involves systemic, often subtle practices that limit individuals' access to leadership, authority, and recognition based on gender. In educational institutions, this bias appears in discriminatory recruitment and promotion, exclusion from decision-making, and stereotyped beliefs about leadership competence. Leadership qualities are frequently viewed as masculine, which marginalizes women's leadership potential and legitimacy (Acker, 2012; Morley, 2014).

Conceptual Explication of Key Terms

Gender equity differs from gender equality by emphasizing fairness and justice through targeted support to correct historical disadvantages. In educational leadership, equity requires dismantling barriers such as stereotyping and unequal professional development opportunities. Despite formal policy commitments, gender inequity persists in Nigerian educational leadership due to weak implementation and enduring socio-cultural norms (UNESCO, 2018; Adeleke, 2019; Ogbogu, 2013).

Gender Bias and Its Manifestations in Educational Settings: Gender bias in education operates through beliefs and institutional structures that favor one gender over another. It influences leadership appointments, workload allocation, performance assessment, and access to advancement. Nigerian studies reveal that patriarchal norms continue to sustain gender disparities in leadership (Acker, 2012; Aina, 2013; Ogbogu, 2011).

Leadership Practices in Educational Institutions: Leadership practices determine institutional culture, governance, and accountability. Gender-inclusive leadership fosters participation, collegiality, and organizational effectiveness, while gender-biased leadership weakens morale, accountability, and quality assurance,

especially in Nigerian public institutions (Bush, 2020; Ogunode & Abubakar, 2021; Oyetade, 2019).

Assurance in Education: Quality assurance involves systematic processes to maintain and improve educational standards, including curriculum delivery, governance, and staff development (Harvey & Green, 2019). In Nigeria, effective quality assurance also addresses equity and accountability (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2010).

Interrelationship among Gender Equity, Leadership, and Quality Assurance

Gender equity, leadership practices, and quality assurance are mutually reinforcing. Equity-driven leadership strengthens transparency and accountability, while gender-sensitive quality assurance mechanisms help identify and correct disparities. Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa shows that inclusive leadership contributes to sustainable quality improvement and institutional effectiveness (Acker, 2012; Bush, 2020; Ogbogu, 2011).

Theoretical Frameworks

Feminist Leadership Theory- 1990s-2000s

Feminist Leadership Theory evolved from feminist critiques of traditional, male-dominated leadership models rather than from a single founder. Scholars such as Chin (2007) and Eagly and Carli (2007) argue that conventional leadership privileges hierarchy, control, and authority, while marginalising collaborative and relational practices. The theory challenges patriarchal power structures and promotes shared and participatory leadership grounded in equity, inclusion, social justice, and an awareness of gendered and intersectional power relations. Leadership is therefore viewed as a transformative and empowering process rather than a position of dominance (Chin, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Within educational settings, Feminist Leadership Theory provides a framework for exposing gender bias in recruitment, promotion, and institutional culture, while encouraging inclusive leadership through mentorship, networking, and equitable policy development. By emphasising collaboration, care, and accountability, feminist leadership supports institutional transformation that benefits both women and men (Blackmore, 2013; Chin, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Social Justice and Equity Theory in Education

Social Justice and Equity Theory in education similarly focuses on fairness and inclusion, asserting that all learners deserve equitable access to educational opportunities and outcomes irrespective of gender, socioeconomic status, culture, or ethnicity. Drawing on Rawls' (1971) notion of justice as fairness, the theory extends beyond equal treatment to prioritise need-based support for disadvantaged groups through inclusive curricula, affirmative action, and culturally responsive teaching (Banks, 2015; Gewirtz, 1998).

The theory also highlights how structural factors such as poverty, disability, gender bias, and geographical location shape educational participation and outcomes, necessitating the dismantling of discriminatory practices and power

imbalances within educational systems (Apple, 2013; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). In developing contexts like Nigeria, where inequalities in access and quality persist, social justice and equity frameworks are essential for guiding policy reforms, inclusive leadership, and community engagement, positioning education as a tool for social transformation and national development (Akinpelu, 2005; Obioma, 2014).

Gender Equity Bias in Educational Institutions

Gender bias in educational leadership may take structural, cultural, or interpersonal forms. Structural bias includes unequal policies and procedures, while cultural bias reflects gendered norms and expectations. Interpersonal bias manifests through stereotypes and discriminatory behaviors.

Recruitment and Appointment Processes

Recruitment processes often reflect implicit biases that favor male candidates for leadership roles, particularly in senior positions. Criteria emphasizing uninterrupted career trajectories and traditional leadership styles disadvantage women (Morley, 2014).

Promotion and Career Advancement

Women are often said to face promotion barriers such as limited access to mentorship, leadership training, and professional networks, attributed to factors like marriage, low self-confidence, and sexual harassment. These challenges are commonly linked to the persistence of the "glass ceiling" in educational leadership. However, this narrative appears questionable in some educational institutions in Delta State, where women dominate both staff strength and leadership positions. For example, at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, key leadership roles, including Provost, Registrar, Bursar, and Chief Librarian, are held by women, while women also constitute over half of Deans and Heads of Departments. This suggests that, in this context, the glass ceiling may be more perceived than real, with men appearing relatively disadvantaged.

Decision-Making and Governance Structures

Gender imbalance in governance structures limits the diversity of perspectives informing institutional decisions. This imbalance can result in policies that inadequately address equity and quality concerns.

Cultural, Social, and Institutional Drivers of Gender Bias

Gender bias in educational leadership is a structural problem shaped by entrenched socio-cultural norms, patriarchal power relations, and resistant institutional cultures that frame leadership as inherently masculine. These norms limit women's access to senior leadership and weaken their legitimacy, even when they are appointed, while persistent gender imbalance reflects weak policy implementation rather than failures of women-led institutions (Acker, 2012; Connell, 2009; Aina, 2010; Okeke, 2018). Consequently, women remain concentrated

in administrative roles and underrepresented in top academic positions such as vice-chancellors and provosts, a pattern driven by cultural expectations and prestige hierarchies rather than differences in competence (Morley, 2013; Taiwo, 2025; Kurga, 2022). Evidence from Nigeria and beyond shows that women leaders often adopt inclusive and developmental leadership styles that enhance institutional performance, underscoring that leadership effectiveness is not gendered but constrained by unequal access to power and opportunities (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Morley, 2014).

Implications of Gender Bias for Institutional Effectiveness

Gender bias undermines institutional effectiveness by reinforcing inequities in staffing, leadership access, and workload distribution, which weakens morale, trust, and organizational commitment (Acker, 2012; Eagly & Carli, 2007). By excluding diverse voices from decision-making, institutions limit innovation, transparency, and accountability, thereby reducing adaptability and quality assurance (Morley, 2013; UNESCO, 2015). In Nigeria, the continued marginalization of qualified women in leadership further contributes to inefficient resource use, weak policy implementation, and poorer educational outcomes (Odejide et al., 2016)

Gender-Responsive Leadership Styles

Gender-responsive leadership goes beyond neutrality by deliberately addressing structural inequalities and gendered barriers within educational institutions. Such leadership challenges discriminatory norms and power relations while embedding inclusivity, fairness, and sensitivity into governance processes. By promoting equitable representation and access to professional development, gender-responsive leadership enhances organizational effectiveness and institutional sustainability (Acker, 2012; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Inclusive and Participatory Leadership Practices

Inclusive leadership prioritizes shared decision-making and meaningful participation across gender and social groups. Participatory practices strengthen transparency, accountability, and trust, fostering collective ownership and institutional cohesion. Research indicates that inclusive leadership improves policy legitimacy, sustainability, and social integration within educational institutions (Northouse, 2022; Oplatka, 2016).

Ethical Leadership and Equity-Based Decision Making

Ethical leadership is grounded in integrity, justice, and respect for diversity, emphasizing equity rather than uniformity in decision-making. By critically examining how policies affect different groups, ethical leaders promote fair access to opportunities and outcomes, thereby advancing gender equity and reinforcing institutional accountability (Brown & Treviño, 2006; UNESCO, 2019).

Role of Leaders in Challenging Gender Stereotypes

Educational leaders are central to dismantling gender stereotypes through equitable policies, transparent recruitment and promotion systems, and inclusive representation in decision-making structures. By modeling non-gendered expectations in leadership roles, task allocation, and performance evaluation, leaders help reshape institutional cultures and reinforce the principle that leadership competence is not gender-specific (Acker, 2012; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Capacity Building and Mentorship for Gender-Equitable Leadership

Capacity building and structured mentorship are vital for addressing gender disparities in educational leadership. Leadership training and mentorship enhance skills, confidence, and access to professional networks, particularly for women operating within male-dominated systems. In Nigeria and similar contexts, institutionalized mentorship and targeted development programmes are essential for strengthening leadership pipelines and promoting sustainable, gender-equitable governance structures (Adeleke & Aminu, 2021; Morley, 2013).

Quality Assurance in Educational Institutions-Concept and Objectives of Quality Assurance

Quality assurance (QA) in education encompasses structured and continuous processes designed to ensure that teaching, learning, and administrative practices meet established standards and are consistently improved. Its primary aims are to enhance accountability, promote ongoing improvement, and strengthen stakeholder confidence, including that of students, parents, employers, and regulatory agencies (Harvey & Green, 1993; UNESCO, 2017). A functional QA framework aligns institutional policies, instructional delivery, and assessment systems with national and international benchmarks to ensure the relevance, credibility, and sustainability of educational outcomes (Ogunode & Musa, 2020).

Internal and External Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Quality assurance operates through both internal and external mechanisms. Internally, institutions rely on self-evaluation, peer review, staff appraisal, curriculum review, and professional development programmes to improve instructional quality and institutional performance (Adebayo, 2018). These mechanisms promote reflective practice, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Externally, QA is enforced through accreditation, inspections, and monitoring by regulatory and professional bodies to ensure compliance with minimum academic standards and public accountability (NUC, 2015). The integration of internal and external QA processes is vital for sustaining institutional credibility and enhancing overall educational quality.

Leadership Roles in Quality Assurance Implementation

Educational leadership is central to the effective implementation of quality assurance systems. Institutional leaders are tasked with fostering a culture of

quality, coordinating resources, and ensuring compliance with established standards (Bush, 2020). Through strategic planning, transparent governance, staff motivation, and systematic monitoring, leaders strengthen institutional commitment to QA. Visible leadership support for quality processes encourages staff engagement and reinforces the institution's capacity for sustainable improvement (Okeke & Dlamini, 2019).

Gender Equity as a Quality Indicator in Education

Gender equity is increasingly viewed as a key dimension of educational quality. Institutions that promote equitable access, participation, and advancement for all genders demonstrate a commitment to inclusiveness, social justice, and human rights (UNESCO, 2019). Gender-responsive leadership and policies enhance staff morale, student retention, and balanced representation in decision-making roles (Acker, 2012; Eagly & Carli, 2007). As such, gender equity functions not only as an ethical requirement but also as a strategic indicator of effective quality assurance in education.

Impact of Leadership Practices on Teaching, Learning, and Institutional Outcomes

Leadership practices play a critical role in shaping teaching quality, learning experiences, and institutional effectiveness. Participatory and inclusive leadership styles foster collaboration, innovation, and professional development among staff, which enhances instructional delivery and student engagement (Leithwood et al., 2020). Equity-driven and quality-focused leadership is also associated with stronger academic outcomes, improved organizational performance, and increased public trust. Collectively, these outcomes strengthen quality assurance mechanisms and support long-term institutional sustainability.

Interplay between Gender Equity Bias, Leadership Practices, and Quality Assurance

Influence of Gender-Biased Leadership on Quality Assurance: Gender-biased leadership undermines quality assurance by excluding diverse perspectives and reinforcing unequal power relations in decision-making. Leadership structures that privilege one gender often produce policies and evaluation practices marked by limited transparency, weak accountability, and biased performance assessments (Acker, 2012; Morley, 2013). In educational institutions, this bias manifests through unequal workload distribution, restricted access to leadership roles for women, and declining standards in teaching, research, and administration, thereby reducing the credibility and effectiveness of quality assurance systems (Ogunode & Musa, 2021).

Gender-Inclusive Leadership as a Driver of Quality Improvement: Gender-inclusive leadership strengthens quality assurance by promoting participatory governance, shared responsibility, and institutional accountability. By valuing

diverse perspectives, inclusive leadership enhances innovation, staff morale, and monitoring processes, which contribute to improved learning outcomes and sustained quality improvement (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Morley, 2014; Aina & Salami, 2020). Embedding equity within leadership practices therefore supports /continuous improvement and the maintenance of high academic standards.

Challenges to Promoting Gender Equity and Quality Assurance

Institutional and Structural Barriers: Rigid hierarchies and entrenched discriminatory practices continue to restrict women's access to leadership and decision-making roles, reinforcing inequality and weakening institutional oversight (Acker, 2012; Odejide, 2016).

Socio-Cultural and Policy Constraints: Patriarchal norms and persistent gender stereotypes undermine equity initiatives, while weak policy implementation and enforcement render many gender equity frameworks ineffective, particularly in developing contexts (Morley, 2013; Aina & Salami, 2020).

Resistance to Change and Leadership Gaps: Resistance from dominant power structures and limited leadership commitment impede gender-responsive reforms. Leaders who benefit from existing inequalities often oppose inclusive initiatives, slowing progress toward effective quality assurance systems (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Ogunode & Musa, 2021).

Monitoring, Accountability, and Resource Limitations: Weak monitoring frameworks, limited gender-disaggregated data, and inadequate financial and human resources constrain the implementation of equity-focused quality assurance reforms, especially in public institutions facing competing priorities (Morley, 2014; Odejide, 2016).

Strategies for Enhancing Gender Equity and Quality Assurance

Policy Reforms and Institutional Frameworks: The development and enforcement of comprehensive gender policies, supported by clear accountability frameworks, are essential for institutional transformation. Such policies should be embedded within broader quality assurance systems to ensure sustainability and effectiveness (Morley, 2013).

Leadership Development and Training Programs: Targeted leadership development programs can strengthen capacity for gender-responsive and inclusive leadership. Training initiatives that focus on equity, ethical leadership, and participatory governance are critical for reshaping institutional cultures (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Aina & Salami, 2020).

Gender-Responsive Quality Assurance Models: Integrating gender-sensitive indicators into quality assurance frameworks enhances monitoring, evaluation, and accountability. These models ensure that institutional assessments reflect equity considerations alongside traditional performance metrics (Morley, 2014).

Data-Driven Monitoring and Evaluation: The use of gender-disaggregated data and evidence-based evaluation supports informed decision-making and continuous improvement. Reliable data systems enable institutions to measure progress, identify disparities, and design targeted interventions (Acker, 2012).

Stakeholder Engagement and Advocacy: Active engagement of stakeholders—including staff, students, policymakers, and communities—strengthens institutional commitment to gender equity and quality assurance. Collaborative advocacy fosters shared ownership of reforms and enhances the legitimacy of equity-driven initiatives (Ogunode & Musa, 2021).10. Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

Implications of this Chapter for Educational Development

This chapter projects critical implications for educational development to ensure quality input and output. Some of the implications are for school leaders and administrators, teacher education and professional development, policymakers and regulatory agencies, and institutional governance and accountability.

Inclusive and gender-equitable education requires leadership, training, policy, and governance to work in concert. School leaders must embed gender equity into institutional culture by modelling fair practices, involving diverse voices in decision-making, and challenging stereotypes, rather than treating equity as a symbolic policy (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Northouse, 2022). Teacher education and continuous professional development should equally prioritise gender equity, equipping educators with the skills to recognise bias, manage power relations, and promote inclusive participation in schools (UNESCO, 2019; OECD, 2021). At the systemic level, policymakers and regulatory bodies must implement gender-responsive policies supported by accountability mechanisms such as audits, monitoring, and enforcement of non-discrimination standards (UN Women, 2020). Similarly, gender-balanced governance structures and transparent decision-making enhance institutional performance and ensure that gender equity becomes a measurable and enforceable outcome rather than an aspirational ideal (Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009; OECD, 2021).

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted how gender bias in leadership undermines fairness and weakens institutional quality and performance. It also shows that inclusive, gender-responsive leadership improves effectiveness, staff motivation, and educational outcomes.

Gender-equitable leadership is vital for fostering inclusive and high-quality educational environments. When leadership is fair and responsive to gender issues, it promotes equal opportunities for staff and students and encourages a culture of respect, innovation, and excellence. It also strengthens sustainability by opening leadership pathways and decision-making to diverse talent.

Sustainable quality assurance requires ethical, inclusive leadership that addresses gender equity. Lasting improvements in educational quality are achievable only when leadership is rooted in fairness and inclusivity. Therefore, tackling gender bias is not just a matter of social justice but a key strategy for enhancing educational quality and long-term institutional development.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

GENDER EQUITY AS A MORAL OBLIGATION IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: ETHICAL AUTHORITY, POWER, AND RESPONSIBILITY IN CONTEMPORARY INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

Despite decades of policy interventions and diversity initiatives, gender inequality in educational leadership remains a persistent global challenge. Women continue to be underrepresented in senior administrative roles, encounter barriers to advancement that men rarely face, and often navigate leadership under gendered expectations and constraints that shape their experiences differently (Fuller et al., 2018). While these disparities are frequently discussed in terms of fairness or social progress, this chapter reframes gender equity in educational leadership as a moral imperative—a fundamental ethical responsibility rather than a matter of pragmatism or policy preference (Stefkovich, 2018).

Viewing gender equity as a moral obligation shifts the conversation from optional compliance to ethical necessity. It positions gender equity as non-negotiable, a justice requirement that institutions cannot legitimately ignore (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014). This perspective emphasizes respect for human dignity and principles of fairness, moving beyond instrumental justifications related to organizational efficiency or effectiveness. It establishes that achieving gender equity is a duty for leaders and institutions, not a discretionary goal, enabling the transition from tokenistic diversity programmes to meaningful structural transformation (Eyal & Katz, 2021).

Philosophical reasoning supports understanding gender equity as a moral obligation through multiple, mutually reinforcing perspectives. From a deontological standpoint, equity arises from treating individuals as ends in themselves rather than as means; institutional structures that systematically disadvantage women violate their autonomy, dignity, and moral equality (Grace, 2019). From a consequentialist perspective, gender inequity represents a significant waste of human potential and an avoidable source of harm that institutions are ethically obligated to mitigate (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Virtue ethics emphasizes that equitable practices reflect institutional character and ethical excellence, integral to cultivating responsible and ethical leadership. The educational context heightens

these moral responsibilities, as schools and universities are explicitly dedicated to human development and democratic citizenship, missions undermined when gender inequities persist in leadership structures (Horsford et al., 2020).

Educational Leadership and Moral Authority: The Ethical Basis of Legitimacy

Educational leadership is inherently a moral practice, encompassing the exercise of power over others, influence during formative life stages, and stewardship of institutions serving public purposes (Grace, 2019). Leaders' legitimacy is grounded not only in formal roles or technical competence but in ethical authority—earning trust by exercising power justly, responsibly, and for meaningful purposes (Stefkovich, 2018; Eyal & Katz, 2021).

Ethical leadership frameworks highlight virtues essential to moral authority. Responsible leaders honor obligations to students, teachers, families, and communities. Authentic leaders integrate their values into decision-making and bring their full selves to leadership roles. Present leaders focus attentively on individuals and circumstances rather than treating people as abstract categories (Grace, 2019). Together, these virtues establish the moral authority that legitimizes educational leadership.

Gender equity intersects directly with this moral authority. Institutions that systematically exclude or marginalize women undermine principles of fairness and equal treatment, core components of legitimate leadership in democratic societies (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014). Leaders operating within unjust systems cannot claim full moral authority, regardless of formal titles or technical skill. Such gendered exclusion often reflects cultural norms devaluing women's contributions, contradicting educational missions of fostering diverse talents and capacities (Fuller et al., 2018).

Moreover, the legitimacy of educational institutions in diverse societies depends on representative and responsive leadership. When leadership fails to reflect the diversity of students, teachers, and communities, it diminishes democratic legitimacy and moral authority. Leaders modeling exclusion reinforce hierarchies rather than democratic citizenship and social justice (Horsford et al., 2020). Compliance with formal equal opportunity regulations alone is insufficient; institutions can technically adhere to anti-discrimination laws while maintaining informal practices and cultures that continue to marginalize women from leadership roles (Christman & McClellan, 2016).

Gender Inequality as a Moral Problem: Beyond Policy and Structural Explanations

Gender inequality in educational leadership is often framed as a policy challenge requiring recruitment reform, a structural challenge demanding organizational change, or a cultural challenge necessitating attitude shifts. While these perspectives capture aspects of the problem, they risk overlooking its core ethical dimension (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Gender inequality should be recognized

as a moral problem in itself—an ethical violation that cannot be reduced to technical failures, procedural gaps, or sociocultural patterns.

Moral considerations encompass harm, duty, and character. Gender inequality manifests all three: it causes tangible harms—discrimination, marginalization, lost contributions from talented women, and limited role models for students; it represents duty violations, as institutions fail to treat individuals fairly, respect their dignity, and provide equitable opportunities; and it reflects character deficiencies at both individual and institutional levels. Bias, prejudice, and unexamined privilege reflect failures of justice, fairness, and humility, while organizations perpetuating inequity demonstrate structural deficits in ethical character, justice, and institutional mission fulfillment (Eyal & Katz, 2021; Fuller et al., 2018).

Concepts of structural injustice are particularly useful in understanding the moral nature of gender inequity. Unlike harms caused solely by individual wrongdoing, structural injustice emerges through social, organizational, and cultural processes that produce inequitable outcomes regardless of individual intent (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014). Gender inequities are reinforced by institutional practices—selection criteria shaped by gendered assumptions, exclusionary networks, caregiving expectations, and cumulative subtle barriers—that require systemic interventions. Recognizing these patterns emphasizes shared responsibility: even well-intentioned leaders participate in unjust systems, and addressing inequity necessitates collective institutional commitment rather than reliance on isolated actors (Christman & McClellan, 2016).

The Ethical Foundations of Gender Equity: Justice, Fairness, and Respect for Persons

Recognizing gender inequality as a moral issue invites a closer examination of the philosophical bases that establish gender equity as an ethical imperative. Various ethical frameworks converge on the conclusion that institutions and leaders bear distinct but complementary duties to promote gender equity. While these frameworks differ in emphasis, together they provide a robust moral rationale for equitable practices, highlighting the complexity of translating ethical principles into practical organizational policies (Stefkovich, 2018).

Justice as a Moral Foundation

The principle of justice offers perhaps the clearest grounding for obligations toward gender equity. Modern theories of justice propose that social institutions should be organized in ways that any rational, free, and equal person would accept, irrespective of gender. This implies that no individual should face systematic disadvantage because of being male or female (Grace, 2019). Justice, therefore, demands removing barriers that limit women's access to leadership and ensuring institutional norms do not privilege masculine behaviors. However, feminist scholars

caution that purely abstract notions of justice often fail to address the lived realities of gender-based inequities (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014).

Contemporary justice perspectives extend beyond equitable resource allocation to challenge cultural norms that devalue feminine-coded traits. They advocate transforming organizational practices that favor masculine leadership styles and fostering genuine opportunities for diverse leadership expressions (Fuller et al., 2018). The capabilities approach, in particular, reframes justice as the real opportunities individuals have to achieve meaningful functioning, rather than merely formal equality or resource distribution (Eyal & Katz, 2021). In educational leadership, this translates into not only removing formal barriers but also ensuring women can develop leadership competencies, exercise them fully, and pursue leadership careers without structural disadvantages (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

Respect for Persons: A Kantian Perspective

Kantian ethics offers a complementary rationale rooted in the principle of respect for persons. This principle asserts that all individuals must be treated as ends in themselves, never merely as means, recognizing their inherent autonomy, dignity, and moral worth. Institutional practices that systematically exclude women or enforce conformity to masculine norms fail to honor these principles. Tokenistic approaches to gender equity, in which women are appointed primarily to meet demographic targets without genuine institutional commitment, violate this Kantian imperative (Christman & McClellan, 2016; Grace, 2019).

Care Ethics and Relational Responsibility

Care ethics adds a relational dimension to the ethical case for gender equity, emphasizing interdependence, responsiveness, and attention to human vulnerability (Brooks & Arnold, 2018). Rather than abstract universality, care ethics foregrounds moral responsibility arising from relationships. In educational contexts, this approach obliges leaders to nurture institutional cultures grounded in care, attend to individual needs, and recognize the relational harms caused by gender inequality (Horsford et al., 2020). Promoting gender equity through this lens is not merely a matter of fairness; it is a moral obligation to prevent suffering, enhance human flourishing, and cultivate environments where all members can thrive (Stefkovich, 2018).

By integrating principles of justice, Kantian respect for persons, and care ethics, the ethical foundation for gender equity becomes multidimensional. Institutions and leaders are called not only to ensure fair access and formal opportunities but also to transform cultural norms, develop real capabilities, and foster relationally responsive organizational climates. This holistic ethical grounding underscores that achieving gender equity is both a moral duty and a practical challenge requiring sustained commitment across multiple dimensions of institutional life.

Understanding Gender Equity as a Moral Obligation in Educational Leadership

Recognizing gender equity as a moral imperative requires examining the intersection of power, responsibility, and institutional duty within educational leadership. Leaders in education hold considerable authority: they make hiring and promotion decisions, allocate resources, set institutional priorities, shape organizational culture, and influence the educational experiences of students, teachers, and communities (Stefkovich, 2018). This authority is not for personal gain but is entrusted to leaders for the purpose of advancing the welfare of all stakeholders. The fiduciary nature of educational leadership imposes ethical responsibilities that surpass those of individuals in non-fiduciary roles (Grace, 2019).

Fiduciary duty encompasses several critical dimensions relevant to gender equity. First, leaders must prioritize the interests of the institution and its stakeholders rather than reinforcing systems that serve existing power holders (Eyal & Katz, 2021). Leadership structures that privilege men or masculine norms may benefit those already in positions of power, yet fail to serve the institution's broader mission of supporting all students and employing qualified educators equitably (Fuller et al., 2018). Second, fiduciaries are obligated to exercise competence and diligence in fulfilling responsibilities. Leaders who ignore how institutional structures perpetuate gender inequity demonstrate a lack of care in their stewardship. Third, fiduciary duty requires undivided loyalty to beneficiaries; maintaining gender-unequal systems out of convenience or personal comfort violates this obligation (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

Professional ethics frameworks reinforce these obligations. Ethical codes in education emphasize justice, equity, and commitment to student welfare (Stefkovich, 2018). Leaders are ethically required not merely to avoid discrimination but to proactively examine policies and practices for hidden inequities and to take responsibility for fostering systemic transformation (Horsford et al., 2020). Institutions themselves carry moral obligations: they are more than aggregates of individuals, possessing their own ethical status, values, and missions that demand gender-just governance (Grace, 2019).

Distinguishing between role and capacity responsibilities clarifies leadership obligations. Role responsibility arises from the position held—administrators are responsible for schools, trustees for institutions—while capacity responsibility refers to the leader's ability to act effectively within that role (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014). Educational leaders often have both: formal authority and the capacity to influence structures and cultures that either promote or hinder gender equity (Christman & McClellan, 2016). Leaders cannot deflect responsibility by citing structural constraints; while barriers exist, leaders have agency to act within and against these structures to advance equity (Fuller et al., 2018).

Gender Equity and Ethical Decision-Making: Leadership Choices and Moral Accountability

Viewing gender equity as a moral obligation fundamentally shapes decision-making in educational leadership. Equity considerations should permeate every leadership domain, guiding decisions, shaping moral reasoning, and developing the ethical capacity necessary for gender-just outcomes (Stefkovich, 2018). Rather than treating gender equity as an isolated policy area, it must be understood as a lens through which all leadership practice is conducted.

Ethical educational leadership frameworks emphasize principles such as respect for persons, promotion of student welfare, commitment to democratic community, and cultivation of intellectual virtues (Grace, 2019). Gender equity directly aligns with these principles: decisions that perpetuate inequity fail to respect individuals' moral status, may limit role models and opportunities for students, undermine participatory communities, and neglect critical examination of gendered assumptions (Horsford et al., 2020).

Multiple ethical paradigms—justice, care, critique, and professional ethics—provide lenses for evaluating leadership decisions. The justice lens examines fairness and institutional structures; the care lens considers relational impacts and responsiveness to vulnerable populations; the critique lens identifies beneficiaries and harmed parties within broader power dynamics; and the professional lens assesses alignment with ethical standards and codes (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014; Brooks & Arnold, 2018; Stefkovich, 2018).

For example, equitable hiring requires scrutinizing criteria for gender bias, ensuring diverse candidate pools, and fostering organizational cultures that support diverse leaders (Eyal & Katz, 2021). Resource allocation decisions must consider whether programmes led by women or those with caregiving responsibilities receive equitable support, and whether leadership development initiatives address structural inequities (Fuller et al., 2018). Ethical leadership also entails confronting trade-offs; advancing gender equity may conflict with entrenched practices or short-term efficiency, yet these conflicts are fundamentally questions of justice that cannot be sacrificed for convenience (Christman & McClellan, 2016; Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Developing gender-just decision-making capacities involves cultivating practical wisdom—accurate perception, thoughtful deliberation, and morally appropriate action (Grace, 2019).

Normative Implications for Educational Governance: Embedding Gender Equity in Leadership Frameworks

If gender equity is a moral obligation, governance structures, policies, and accountability systems must explicitly support and require gender-just leadership. Educational governance spans multiple levels—from individual leaders to boards and regulatory frameworks—offering opportunities to embed gender equity responsibilities across institutions (Grace, 2019; Stefkovich, 2018).

At the individual level, leadership expectations should explicitly include commitments to gender equity, with clear role descriptions, performance evaluations, and accountability mechanisms (Eyal & Katz, 2021). Evaluation frameworks must go beyond quantitative metrics to assess whether leaders actively challenge inequitable structures, cultivate inclusive cultures, and respond to equity concerns (Fuller et al., 2018).

At the policy level, institutions must examine all policies for gendered effects, including hiring, compensation, workload distribution, professional development, and family leave provisions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Horsford et al., 2020). Participatory governance mechanisms, ensuring women's meaningful representation in decision-making, enhance policy responsiveness to equity concerns (Christman & McClellan, 2016).

Board governance also plays a pivotal role. Boards, as ultimate fiduciaries, should adopt explicit equity policies, regularly assess institutional equity metrics, and pursue board education on equity issues (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014). Professional standards and ethical codes further institutionalize gender equity as a non-negotiable leadership responsibility (Stefkovich, 2018).

Nonetheless, formal governance mechanisms have limits. Policies and rules create accountability but cannot alone cultivate the ethical commitment, relational capacity, and practical wisdom necessary for genuine gender-just leadership (Grace, 2019). Ethical organizational cultures, grounded in professional and moral norms, are essential to realize gender equity beyond mere compliance (Fuller et al., 2018).

Conclusion

This chapter establishes that gender equity in educational leadership is a moral imperative, grounded in justice, fairness, respect, care, and professional responsibility. It frames gender equity not as an optional priority but as a non-negotiable duty for leaders and institutions. Its implications span all aspects of leadership, from individual decision-making to institutional governance, hiring practices, and organizational culture.

Philosophical reasoning supports this moral obligation. Inequity violates principles of fairness, equal treatment, and autonomy, perpetuating exclusion and limiting human flourishing. Care ethics highlights the relational harm caused by inequity, while professional ethics codify the duty of leaders to actively pursue equity.

Understanding gender equity as a moral obligation has practical consequences. Leaders cannot justify inequitable practices for convenience, efficiency, or tradition. Moral duties constrain discretion, requiring leaders to act in alignment with ethical principles regardless of personal preference or institutional pressure. Responsibility for equity extends to all leaders, independent of their role in creating existing disparities.

Embedding equity into governance demands action at multiple levels. Individual leaders must be held accountable for equitable practices, policies must be evaluated for gendered impacts, and institutions must formalize equity standards while fostering ethical cultures rooted in justice and shared moral purpose. Gender equity considerations must permeate all leadership decisions—from hiring and resource allocation to policy formulation and everyday interactions. Leaders must cultivate practical wisdom to recognize inequities, envision alternatives, navigate resistance, and implement fair strategies.

Moral authority in educational leadership depends on ethical consistency. Institutions that claim excellence while sustaining inequitable structures undermine their credibility. True authority arises when values, principles, and practices are aligned.

Ultimately, gender equity is not merely advantageous—it is a moral obligation. Achieving it requires transforming structures, cultures, and mindsets, implementing policies, and fostering genuine ethical commitment. It demands both individual and collective responsibility. The central question is not whether to pursue gender equity, but how to fulfill the moral duty to create educational institutions grounded in justice, care, and respect for the dignity of all.

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CHAPTER TWENTY

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS IN HOME MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

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Introduction

The family is the smallest social unit of a community, and the foundation of every individual in the society. The family starts by a matured male and female, who have consented to bring their asset and liability together and live as one in marital union. The male assumes the position of a husband and the female- a wife; while waiting for the arrival of their children , the future members of the family.

In the family the husband is usually the head, who takes charge of the management of the affairs of the family. Therefore he takes decision on what should be the aims, goals and objectives of the family and communicates such to his wife , who assume the role of a supporter to actualizing her husband's aspirations (Anyakoha, 2015). In the family management, the husband identify the resources available to the family, take decisions on how to harness them and utilize them to achieve family objectives, goals and aims.

In past era, the husband task as the head of the family was usually carried out by his decision alone . He does not consult with his wife or children. This type of management is referred as an anarchy. Anene-Okeakwa (2018) reported that anarchy is an authoritative ruling of subjects, where individuals in the family do not contribute their opinion in the family affairs. This method of management has its own advantages as well as disadvantages that are detrimental to maximizing the potential benefits, the family members would have attained from their available resources. Kurt, (2023) remarked that authoritative leadership management style has the following characteristics;

- Centralized decision making: The leader makes decision independently without consulting with any family member.
- Clear direction and control: The leader directs what members do and process to follow.
- Minimal family member input
- Rigid structure of management

Advantages of Autocratic Management

1. Quick decision making
2. Highly controlled activities
3. Prone to make avoidable mistakes etc

Disadvantages of Authoritative leadership style in family.

Families where authoritative / detective leadership style is employed has the following short comings.

1. Reduced creativity and innovation e.g. Authoritative leaders often value prescriptive routine over new idea
2. In this leadership style family members ability to contribute creative solution or think out side tool box is limited
3. It lowers morale and motivation.
4. It increase stress and resentment among family members
5. Family members may feel resentful of a leader who over-rules their suggestion , potentially leading to negative feeling and disunite in home
6. It encourages over-dependence on the leader, which will hinder members ability to develop problem solving skills of their own.
7. Authoritative leadership style is rigid and inflexible and can not move along with the dynamic nature of societal trends.
8. A persistent authoritative leadership style can also foster the environment of fear and control rather than trust and collaboration.

   All these short comings can negatively affect family members unity and collaboration sustainability.

In recent times, the society is changing in life values and ways of doing things to actualize their set goals and objectives. The society dynamics has also imparted on the family management and leadership styles. Unlike the past, family leadership has embraced modern management styles, and most recently employed is the visionary management style. Anene-Okeakwa, (2018) opined a visionary leader is individual with a compelling, forward-thinking vision for the future, who can inspire and motivate others to work towards and achieve set goals. A visionary leader is characterized by the strategic thinking, innovation, communication skills and ability to foster a collaborative and optimistic. A visionary leader ensure the vision becomes a reality by stating clear goals, outlining strategic plans for achieving set goals and objectives.

Qualities of Visionary Leaders

A visionary leader typically exhibit seven core qualities, these includes;

i. Integrity.
ii. Communication
iii. Vision
iv. Emotional intelligence
v. Resilience

vi. Accountability
vii. Decision making.

These traits empowers the leader to inspire the family members to build trust and navigate complex situations effectively, ultimately fostering productive and growth oriented environment.

Principles of Visionary Leaders

Mulies (2023) remarked visionary leadership is passionate, innovative and forward thinking. The visionary leaders are flexible and willing to take risk. They excel at uniting family members, building creative culture and focusing on long term goals. The main strength of visionary leadership is creating unity and loyalty within the family. Visionary leaders in the family does the following jobs to ensure family members actualize their set goals:

i. Life skill trainer
ii. Fundraising coordinator
iii. Family management
iv. Editor in chief
v. Brand manager
vi. Physical therapist
vii. Investment manager
viii. Product designer.

The visionary leader performs these tasks by adopting the seven (7) Ls principles of learn, listen, love, look and laugh, live, labour and last.In the families, visionary leaders finds the passion for the family in thinking big on the goals that can be achieved by the family members, using their limited resources, researching other visionaries, writing down his/ her vision, sharing the visions with the family members, setting goals and taking actions that will lead to the actualization of the goals in the family.

The Personality Traits of a Visionary Leader

The personality trait of a visionary leader includes:

i. Persistent and bold
ii. Strategic
iii. Risk taking
iv. Inspirational
v. Optimistic and innovative

James (2022) also affirmed that visionary leadership style enables family members grow to desired status in life, unit family members through collaboration and improve on out dated practices to achieve better results. Being a visionary leader is not innate talent; rather, it is a skill set that can be cultivated with intentionality, reflection and practices. Therefore, people looking forward to

elevate their impact or lay the groundwork of transformative change can practice these tips to step into visionary leadership style.

Keys to successful Leadership in the Family

i. Integrity: Integrity is vital for leader and organization to preserve family members confidence.
ii. Responsiveness
iii. Courage
iv. Empathy
v. Focuses inclusion and belonging
vi. Continues learning
vii. Emotional intelligence.

Conclusion

Leadership dynamics in home management is a key factor in the sustainability of family relationship of its members. This is because, family members that contributed to the progressive development and attainment of family set objectives, goals and aim; will have clear ideas about the mail-stones they passed through to get to their pick of success. The experiences acquired in the past in family issues, will enable their willing to continue to pull resources together for greater heights. Therefore, the adaptation of dynamic leadership style can foster collaboration of family members in decision making and attainment of set goals as well as ensure sustainability.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

EXPLORING LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS IN HOME MANAGEMENT AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIP SUSTAINABILITY IN OYO AND OSUN STATES, SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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Introduction

Home management, a major component of Home Economics, encompasses the organization, planning, and coordination of household tasks such as nutrition, budgeting, caregiving, clothing and textile maintenance, and small-scale household enterprises. These practices shape daily routines and significantly influence the quality and sustainability of family life. Yet, research and experience have shown that households with similar levels of knowledge or access to resources often record very different outcomes in terms of food security, caregiving quality, communication, and relational stability. A critical factor that explains these differences is leadership within the household, that is, who takes charge of home management and how such leadership is exercised in everyday decision-making and relationships (Usoroh, 2023).

Family leadership is not a new idea, but it has gained renewed attention as scholars have applied leadership typologies from organizational studies to household contexts. Leadership within families can generally be classified into three broad styles namely: Transformational or authoritative style involves warmth, shared decision-making, encouragement, and modelling of desired behaviours. Families led this way tend to adopt cooperative budgeting, collective meal planning, and mutual caregiving practices that are more sustainable over time. The authoritarian or transactional style emphasizes unilateral decisions, rigid rules, and contingent rewards or punishments. Although this approach may ensure immediate compliance, it often undermines effective communication and adaptive problem-solving. Finally, the laissez-faire style is characterized by minimal involvement or unclear responsibility, often producing weak coordination of tasks and disorganization in household routines (Fries, 2021; Li, 2024). These leadership dynamics are fundamental because they determine whether the technical skills of home management become embedded practices that support sustainable family relationships or remain inconsistent efforts vulnerable to collapse.

The impact of family leadership on sustainable relationships is visible through several mechanisms. First, inclusive leadership promotes household buy-in

for routines such as meal planning and budgeting, ensuring continuity even under pressure. Second, effective leaders coordinate domestic labour and clarify roles, reducing conflicts and creating efficiency. Third, transformational leaders serve as role models, transmitting home management skills to younger family members and reinforcing intergenerational sustainability. Lastly, leadership styles shape how families respond to crises such as economic hardship or health emergencies. Families with organized and supportive leadership adapt more effectively, preserving essential routines and reducing relational stress (Cassinat et al., 2021; Hunter et al., 2023).

Global studies have documented how parenting styles and family leadership patterns predict family cohesion, caregiving quality, and relational outcomes (Li, 2024). During COVID-19, for example, households with clear and inclusive leadership were better able to maintain caregiving routines and food security than households where leadership was either authoritarian or absent (Cassinat et al., 2021; Hunter et al., 2023). In Nigeria, Home Management scholarship has consistently highlighted the subject's potential to strengthen family living by equipping households with practical skills for nutrition, resource management, and home-based income generation (Usoroh, 2023). However, while school curricula and extension programmes disseminate knowledge, the degree to which households adopt and sustain these practices depends heavily on intra-household leadership styles and gender dynamics. Some studies on entrepreneurial and practical skills in Home Management note that adoption is often hindered in families where leadership is either excessively rigid or diffuse (Okoro, 2024; TAVeJ, 2024).

In Oyo and Osun States, the importance of family leadership in home management is especially relevant. Both states are hubs of educational activities with active Home Economics curricula at the secondary level, supported by government and community programmes (Oyo State Government, 2025; Osun State Ministry of Education, 2023). Yet, despite widespread exposure to home management principles, many households in these states still struggle with sustaining beneficial practices such as balanced nutrition, equitable distribution of household labour, or consistent financial planning. Reports suggest that the challenge is not merely a lack of knowledge but rather how family leadership styles affect adoption and long-term commitment to these practices. Cultural expectations regarding gender roles and authority structures further complicate household leadership, making the South-West a particularly relevant setting to investigate the dynamics of family leadership and sustainable family relationships.

Despite the importance of this subject, there is a notable research gap. Nigerian studies on Home Management have tended to emphasized teacher preparation, curriculum implementation, and school-based skill acquisition (Usoroh, 2023; Ogbonna, 2024). While these areas are important, there has been limited focus on the intra-household managerial dimension, particularly how family members' leadership styles influence the sustainability of home management

practices. This omission leaves policymakers and practitioners with incomplete strategies, as programmes focusing only on technical skill training may fail to address the relational and leadership factors that determine whether skills are effectively applied at the family level. Thus, a systematic examination of leadership dynamics in home management and their impact on sustainable family relationships in Oyo and Osun States is urgently needed to bridge this gap and provide evidence-based guidance for family-centred interventions.

Statement of the Problem

Households in Oyo and Osun States are exposed to knowledge of home management through formal schooling, community outreach, and religious institutions. However, evidence shows that improvements in sustainable family relationships remain inconsistent. While some households successfully adopt and sustain practices like effective budgeting, regular nutritious meals, and constructive caregiving routines, others fail to maintain them even when they have access to the same resources. This inconsistency raises questions about the role of leadership within families. If household leadership is transformational and inclusive, practices are more likely to persist and strengthen family cohesion. Conversely, authoritarian or laissez-faire leadership patterns often lead to conflict, weak communication, or discontinuity in beneficial practices. Yet, empirical research linking family leadership styles directly to sustainable outcomes in Oyo and Osun is scarce. This gap creates a problem for both theory and practice, as it leaves interventions focusing on skill acquisition without addressing the household leadership factors that mediate success.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study was to investigate the influence of leadership dynamics in home management on sustainable family relationships in Oyo and Osun States, South-West Nigeria. Specifically, this study sought to:

i. identify the prevalent leadership dynamics in home management among families in Oyo and Osun States.
ii. examine how leadership dynamics in home management influence sustainable family relationships.
iii. determine the extent to which mediating factors such as socio-economic conditions, cultural expectations, and gender roles play in family leadership dynamics and sustainable family relationships.

Research Questions

i. What are the prevalent leadership dynamics in home management among families in Oyo and Osun States?
ii. How do leadership dynamics in home management influence sustainable family relationships?

iii. What mediating factors do socio-economic conditions, cultural expectations, and gender roles play in family leadership dynamics and sustainable family relationships?

Research Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses (H_0):

i. H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between leadership dynamics in home management and sustainable family relationships in Oyo and Osun States.
ii. H_{02}: There is no significant difference in leadership dynamics between families in Oyo and Osun States.
iii. H_{03}: There is no significant joint contribution of socio-economic conditions, cultural expectations, and gender roles to sustainable family relationships in Oyo and Osun States.

Scope of the Study

The study was conducted among households in Oyo and Osun States, focused on family members who play leadership roles in home management. It did not focus on school leadership but rather on the intra-household leadership dynamics that influence sustainable family outcomes. The research covered selected urban and rural local government areas and gathered data from adult family members directly involved in home management during the 2024–2025 academic periods.

Literature Review

Concept of Leadership Dynamics in Family Context

Leadership is a process of influencing, guiding, and coordinating individuals to achieve collective goals. Within the family setting, leadership dynamics refer to the patterns of decision-making, distribution of responsibilities, and management of interpersonal relationships among family members (Oladipo & Ajayi, 2022). Unlike organizational leadership, family leadership is less formal but deeply rooted in cultural norms, gender roles, and socio-economic conditions. In traditional Yoruba households, men are usually designated as heads of families, yet women exert strong influence in areas of child socialization, financial planning, and conflict mediation (Ogunleye & Akinola, 2022). Leadership dynamics within the family can manifest in multiple forms, including authoritarian leadership (where one member dominates decisions), democratic leadership (shared participation of members), and laissez-faire leadership (minimal involvement in directing family matters). These dynamics shape not only how resources are allocated but also how harmony, trust, and sustainability are maintained within the family unit (Okoro & Chukwuma, 2021).

Home Management and Leadership Roles

Home management encompasses the planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling of household resources to meet family goals (Umoru, 2024). Leadership within home management is crucial because it determines how roles are assigned,

how financial and human resources are used, and how challenges are resolved. In Oyo and Osun States, where many households face economic constraints due to inflation, unemployment, and underemployment (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2023), effective leadership in home management becomes a key survival strategy. Mothers often assume leadership in domestic resource management, while fathers provide financial direction. Increasingly, however, children especially older adolescents are also emerging as influencers in decision-making, particularly in areas such as education, technology, and lifestyle choices (Adewale & Adepoju, 2021). This multi-layered leadership structure demonstrates the evolving nature of home management.

Sustainable Family Relationships

A sustainable family relationship refers to a state of balance, resilience, and harmony in family life that ensures long-term stability and positive interactions among members (Ede & Mba, 2023). Families that exhibit sustainability demonstrate effective communication, equitable sharing of responsibilities, conflict resolution mechanisms, and adaptability to socio-economic changes. In Oyo and Osun States, sustainability in family relationships is challenged by cultural expectations, migration, and financial pressures. Families in rural areas, for instance, often maintain traditional patriarchal structures, while urban families tend to adopt more egalitarian patterns (Azonuche, 2023). Sustainability therefore requires leadership models that balance tradition with modernity, authority with participation, and economic constraints with resilience.

Theoretical Framework

Two main theories provide insight into leadership dynamics in families:

1. ***Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1978)*** – This theory views the family as an interdependent system where the behaviour of one member affects all others. Leadership in this system ensures equilibrium by coordinating roles, managing conflicts, and promoting adaptation.
2. ***Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1990)*** – Though initially developed in organizational studies, it is applicable to families. Transformational family leaders inspire, motivate, and empower members rather than imposing rigid control. This style encourages participation and sustainable relationships. Together, these theories underscore the need for leadership in family settings that is flexible, adaptive, and participatory to ensure sustainability.

Empirical Review

Leadership Dynamics in Nigerian Families

Studies revealed that Nigerian families are undergoing rapid changes in leadership roles due to economic and cultural transformations. For example, Oladipo and Ajayi (2022) reported that in Oyo State, shared decision-making between

spouses led to improved marital satisfaction and better child outcomes. Similarly, Ogunleye and Akinola (2022) found that democratic leadership styles in households enhanced family resilience during economic downturns. Okoro and Chukwuma (2021) highlighted that authoritarian leadership styles often breed conflict and weaken family cohesion, while participatory models encourage open dialogue and trust. These findings suggest that families in South-West Nigeria benefit more from inclusive leadership patterns.

Globally, family leadership studies also emphasize the value of democratic and transformational leadership. For instance, a study in the United States found that families with shared leadership structures reported higher adaptability and satisfaction (Larson & Richards, 2020). Similarly, in Asia, Lee and Park (2021) observed that family sustainability in South Korea was linked to parental collaboration in household leadership. These insights align with the Nigerian context, suggesting that democratic leadership styles are universally beneficial.

In Oyo and Osun States, the cultural expectation of male dominance still prevails, yet economic realities have necessitated more egalitarian leadership structures. Women, due to their roles in market trade and informal economies, contribute substantially to family income and thus demand a voice in leadership (Adewale & Adepoju, 2021). Moreover, rural-urban migration has disrupted traditional family patterns, with extended family members or children often assuming leadership in the absence of parents (Azonuche, 2023). These contextual realities highlight the evolving nature of family leadership dynamics in these states, where tradition, modernity, and economic survival intersect.

Despite increasing interest in family leadership, most existing studies in Nigeria either focus broadly on gender roles or household economics without explicitly linking leadership dynamics to sustainable family relationships in specific states. There seems to be a paucity of region-specific data from Oyo and Osun States that captures how leadership styles among family members directly shape relationship stability and resilience. This study sought to fill that gap by providing empirical evidence from these states.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it allowed for the collection of quantitative data from a large population and provides insights into existing leadership dynamics in home management and their impact on sustainable family relationships. This approach is effective for identifying patterns, relationships, and influences without manipulating the variables under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised married couples and adult family members (18 years and above) residing in Oyo and Osun States, South-West

Nigeria. These states were chosen because they represent socio-culturally rich Yoruba communities where traditional family leadership structures intersect with modern, evolving household dynamics.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 400 respondents were drawn from the population across both states, with 200 participants selected from Oyo State and 200 from Osun State. A multistage sampling technique was employed:

1. Stage One: Purposive selection of two local government areas (LGAs) from each state (one urban and one rural).
2. Stage Two: Random selection of wards within the chosen LGAs.
3. Stage Three: Selection of rural and urban communities from the two LGAs
4. Stage Four: Systematic sampling of households, ensuring inclusion of both male and female respondents within families.

This sampling strategy ensured representation of diverse family contexts in both rural and urban settings.

Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "*Leadership Dynamics and Sustainable Family Relationships Questionnaire (LDSFRQ)*." The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

Section A: Demographic data of respondents (age, gender, marital status, occupation, family size, etc.).

Section B: Leadership dynamics in home management (e.g., authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational).

Section C: Sustainable family relationship indicators (communication, conflict resolution, trust, resource sharing).

Section D: Mediating factors (socio-economic conditions, cultural expectations, gender roles).

Items were structured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire was subjected to content and face validity by experts in Home Economics Education, Family Studies, and Educational Research. Their feedback was used to refined the instrument for clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the study objectives.

Reliability of the Instrument

To establish reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 40 respondents outside the sampled population but within the same cultural setting. Data from

the pilot were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70 was obtained and the research instrument was considered reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher, with the assistance of trained research assistants, administered the questionnaires physically and electronically (where possible) to respondents. The assistants were fluent in both English and Yoruba to ensure understanding among respondents with limited literacy.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were sorted, coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Data collected on demographic variables were analyzed using frequency counts and percentage. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation statistics. The formulated hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 were tested 0.05 level of significance using Pearson product moment correlations, multiple regression, T-test and ANOVA respectively.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 400)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	180	45.0
	Female	220	55.0
Age	18–30 years	90	22.5
	31–45 years	170	42.5
	46 years & above	140	35.0
Marital Status	Married	320	80.0
	Single Parents	80	20.0
Family Size	1–4 members	110	27.5
	5–7 members	200	50.0
	Above 7	90	22.5

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. Majority of respondents were female (55%) and married (80%). The largest age category was 31–45 years (42.5%), suggesting that most respondents are within active family management age.

Research Question One

What are the prevalent leadership dynamics in home management among families in Oyo and Osun States?

Table.2: Mean Scores of Leadership Dynamics in Families

Leadership Style	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Rank
Democratic	4.21	0.64	1st
Transformational	3.95	0.71	2nd

Authoritarian	2.84	0.82	3rd
Laissez-faire	2.31	0.93	4th

The result reveals that democratic leadership style ($\bar{x}$ = 4.21) is the most prevalent among families, closely followed by transformational leadership ($\bar{x}$ = 3.95). Authoritarian and laissez-faire styles were less practiced. This finding suggests a shift from traditional patriarchal dominance to participatory household decision-making, particularly in Oyo and Osun States. The result aligns with Oladipo and Ajayi (2022), who observed that shared decision-making increases marital satisfaction and harmony.

Research Question Two

How do leadership dynamics in home management influence sustainable family relationships?

Table 3: Correlation Between Leadership Dynamics and Sustainable Family Relationship Indicators

Leadership Style	Communication (r)	Conflict Resolution (r)	Resource Sharing (r)	Relational Harmony (r)
Democratic	0.62*	0.59*	0.55*	0.61*
Transformational	0.57*	0.54*	0.52*	0.58*
Authoritarian	-0.41*	-0.46*	-0.32	-0.44*
Laissez-faire	-0.28	-0.34*	-0.25	-0.29

p < 0.05;

The results in Table 3 shows strong positive correlations between democratic leadership and indicators of sustainable family relationships, while authoritarian and laissez-faire styles had negative correlations. This means participatory leadership promotes communication, conflict resolution, and relational harmony. The result supports Ede and Mba (2023), who reported that transformational leadership styles enhance family well-being and sustainability.

Research Question Three

What mediating factors such as socio-economic conditions, cultural expectations, and gender roles play in family leadership dynamics and sustainable family relationships?

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Mediating Factors on Sustainable Family Relationships

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p)
Socio-economic conditions	0.41	6.82	0.000*
Gender roles	0.33	5.47	0.001*
Cultural expectations	0.27	4.31	0.003*

$R^2 = 0.49$; $F(3,396) = 22.37$; $p < 0.05$

The results in Table 4 indicate that socio-economic conditions ($\beta = 0.41$) are the strongest predictor of sustainable family relationships, followed by gender roles ($\beta = 0.33$) and cultural expectations ($\beta = 0.27$). This implies that while culture still plays a role, economic realities are now shaping leadership dynamics and relationship sustainability in families. This finding is consistent with Ogunleye and Akinola (2022), who found that household resilience is largely determined by economic stability.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between leadership dynamics in home management and sustainable family relationships in Oyo and Osun States.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Between Leadership Dynamics and Sustainable Family Relationships

Variables	R-value	Sig. (p)	Decision
Leadership Dynamics vs. Sustainable Family Relationships	0.62	0.000*	Reject H_0

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$) shows a strong positive relationship between leadership dynamics and sustainable family relationships. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means the way leadership is exercised in families significantly influences their sustainability.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in leadership dynamics between families in Oyo and Osun States.

Table 6: Independent Samples t-Test of Leadership Dynamics Between Oyo and Osun States

State	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig. (p)	Decision
Oyo	200	3.56	0.72			
Osun	200	3.61	0.74	1.45	0.15	Retain H_0

The result in Table 6 shows no significant difference in leadership dynamics between Oyo and Osun States ($t = 1.45$, $p > 0.05$). This means families in both states share similar leadership patterns, likely because of cultural homogeneity in Yoruba society.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant joint contribution of socio-economic conditions, cultural expectations, and gender roles to sustainable family relationships in Oyo and Osun States.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis of Mediating Factors

R	R^2	F	Sig. (p)	Decision

0.70	0.49	22.37	0.000*	Reject H_0

The regression result in Table 7 indicates a significant joint contribution of socio-economic conditions, cultural expectations, and gender roles to sustainable family relationships ($R^2 = 0.49$, $F = 22.37$, $p < 0.05$). This justifies that family sustainability in Oyo and Osun States cannot be separated from cultural norms, gender roles, and economic realities.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study on research question one revealed that democratic leadership was the most dominant (45.3%), followed by authoritative (28.5%), laissez-faire (16.4%), and autocratic (9.8%). This aligns with earlier research that suggested Nigerian families are increasingly embracing participatory and inclusive leadership models that encourage cooperation and joint decision-making (Aluyor & Idialu, 2023). Similarly, Usoroh (2023) reported that post-COVID family structures in Nigeria leaned towards democratic leadership styles to adapt to economic and emotional stress. This suggests that households in Oyo and Osun are progressively moving away from autocratic structures toward more collaborative approaches, strengthening family cohesion.

Another finding of the study on research question two indicated that family leadership styles explained 39% of the variance in sustainable family relationships ($R^2 = 0.39$). Families where decision-making was shared reported higher levels of communication, trust, and problem-solving. This supports the work of Ede and Mba (2023), who argued that transformational leadership fosters stronger interpersonal bonds and enhances conflict management. In a similar vein, Oyesode, Uko-Aviomoh, and Salami (2022) noted that inclusiveness in household decision-making helps families better cope with rising food costs and economic uncertainties, thereby sustaining harmony in the household.

The finding of the study as revealed by research question three indicated that socio-economic conditions ($\beta = 0.41$) are the strongest predictor of sustainable family relationships, followed by gender roles ($\beta = 0.33$) and cultural expectations ($\beta = 0.27$). This implies that while culture still plays a role, economic realities are now shaping leadership dynamics and relationship sustainability in families. The analysis revealed that these mediating factors collectively accounted for 46% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.46$, $p < 0.01$) in family relationship sustainability. Socio-economic status and cultural norms were identified as strong predictors of leadership patterns, while gender roles moderated the strength of the relationship between leadership and relationship outcomes. Families that balanced cultural expectations with modern values tended to exhibit adaptive leadership structures, improving their relational outcomes. This supports Ogunleye and Akinola (2022), who highlighted the role of cultural flexibility in promoting shared family leadership and also found that household resilience is largely determined by economic stability.

Another finding of the study as revealed by hypothesis one indicated democratic and authoritative leadership styles significantly predicted relationship sustainability, while autocratic and laissez-faire styles weakened cohesion. These findings reinforce the argument of Uko-Aviomoh and Okafor (2023), who found that inclusive leadership in family management strengthens interdependence and resilience among family members.

The finding of the study on hypothesis two indicated that leadership dynamics explained 39% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.39$) in sustainable family relationships. Families practicing democratic and authoritative leadership reported higher levels of emotional stability, teamwork, and satisfaction (Mean = 4.21, SD = 0.68), whereas those with autocratic or laissez-faire styles showed weaker relational bonds and higher levels of conflict. These findings corroborate Ede and Mba (2023), who established that inclusive leadership fosters cooperation and communication in households, leading to stronger marital bonds and parental harmony. Similarly, Ayandoyi and Jembi (2023) emphasized that participatory decision-making in home management enhances relational satisfaction, especially when both spouses share economic and emotional responsibilities.

The finding of the study as indicated by hypothesis three revealed that mediating factors such as socio-economic conditions, cultural expectations, and gender roles had a significant effect on leadership dynamics and sustainable family relationships in the study area ($R^2 = 0.49$, $F=22.37$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that these mediating variables collectively accounted for 46% of the variance in family relationship sustainability. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant effect of the mediating factors, was rejected. This result indicates that the quality and nature of leadership within homes cannot be understood without considering these contextual factors. Families with stronger economic stability, adaptive cultural values, and equitable gender role distribution demonstrated higher levels of cohesion, mutual understanding, and relationship longevity.

Socio-economic conditions emerged as a strong determinant of family leadership patterns and relationship outcomes. Families with higher educational attainment and stable income sources tended to adopt democratic and authoritative leadership styles, characterized by open communication and shared responsibility. Conversely, low-income families were more likely to practice autocratic or laissez-faire leadership, often driven by stress and survival pressure. This finding aligns with Usoroh (2023) and Ede and Mba (2023), who found that economic hardship limits relational flexibility and increases authoritarian control in Nigerian households. Similarly, Aluyor and Idialu (2023) emphasized that economic empowerment fosters emotional security and strengthens cooperative home management. The implication is that financial and educational well-being enhance families' ability to practice inclusive leadership, which in turn sustains harmony and cohesion.

Cultural expectations also significantly mediated family leadership behavior. The findings revealed that families adhering strictly to traditional patriarchal norms were more likely to experience hierarchical leadership, where decision-making is centralized in one person, typically the husband. In contrast, families who reinterpreted or balanced traditional expectations with modern values displayed shared leadership and stronger relational stability. This supports Ogunleye and Akinola (2022), who argued that modernization, religious education, and exposure to urban environments are transforming gender and cultural expectations in Southwest Nigeria. Similarly, Uko-Aviomoh and Okafor (2023) reported that adaptive cultural practices promote mutual understanding, encourage shared domestic management, and enhance relational sustainability.

Gender roles significantly mediated the relationship between leadership dynamics and sustainable family relationships ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). Families that shared decision-making, household responsibilities, and financial duties reported higher satisfaction, trust, and emotional intimacy. On the other hand, families with rigid, male-dominated leadership structures recorded more conflicts and lower cooperation levels. These findings confirm Oladipo and Ajayi (2022), who highlighted that balanced gender roles enhance relational equity and reduce domestic tension. Oyesode, Alabi, and Fadare (2022) similarly noted that gender inclusivity promotes emotional support and adaptive conflict management within Nigerian families.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the quality and sustainability of family relationships in Oyo and Osun States are largely shaped by the leadership dynamics adopted within households. Families where leadership is participatory, inclusive, and transformational are more likely to experience harmony, effective communication, and resilience against socio-economic challenges. Conversely, authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership undermine relational stability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Couples should adopt participatory and democratic leadership in household decision-making to enhance communication, reduce conflict, and promote relational harmony.
2. State government agencies, NGOs, and religious organizations should intensify family life education programmes that emphasize leadership balance, gender equality, and mutual respect among family members.
3. Policymakers should prioritize economic empowerment programmes for families, particularly in Oyo and Osun States, as economic conditions strongly determine the sustainability of family relationships.
4. Cultural reorientation should be used by state governments in preserving positive cultural norms, families should also be encouraged to adapt traditional

leadership roles to modern realities where responsibilities are shared equitably between men and women.

5. Marriage counsellors, community leaders, and faith-based organizations should provide training on effective conflict resolution strategies anchored in democratic and transformational leadership approaches.
6. Policies and programmes should challenge harmful gender stereotypes that limit women's and children's participation in family leadership.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

Leadership dynamics and the principles of quality assurance in educational institutions have become increasingly significant in contemporary educational discourse, as the demand for accountability, efficiency, and sustainable improvement continues to shape the operations of schools, colleges, and universities. Leadership within education is not merely the act of holding a position of authority; it is a dynamic process of influencing, inspiring, and guiding stakeholders towards the realization of a shared vision for institutional growth and excellence. In the Nigerian educational context, leadership dynamics encompass the ability of school leaders to pilot complex socio-political environments, manage scarce resources, foster professional collaboration, and create a culture of continuous improvement that aligns with both national and global educational standards (Ogunyemi & Adepoju, 2023).

Quality assurance in education refers to systematic processes, policies, and practices designed to ensure that the teaching, learning, and administrative functions of an institution meet predetermined standards and satisfy the expectations of stakeholders, including students, parents, employers, and government bodies (Okebukola, 2022). It serves as both a preventive and corrective mechanism, aimed at maintaining and improving the quality of education over time. Leadership plays a central role in operationalizing these principles, as effective leaders must interpret quality standards, communicate them clearly to staff, mobilize resources, and ensure that the institution remains responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities. Without dynamic and visionary leadership, quality assurance processes risk becoming mere bureaucratic exercises that fail to translate into tangible improvements in student learning outcomes (Oluwatobi & Akinyemi, 2024).

In the rapidly evolving educational setting, leadership and quality assurance are inseparable. Educational leaders must adapt to technological innovations, shifting policy directions, and changing societal needs while ensuring that quality benchmarks are met or exceeded. The Nigerian government's emphasis on quality

assurance through agencies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) underscores the importance of leadership that can integrate compliance with innovation, ensuring institutions remain competitive and relevant in the 21st century (Ezeani & Nwogu, 2023). Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of leadership dynamics and quality assurance is essential not only for policy formulation but also for practical interventions that can enhance the credibility, sustainability, and transformative capacity of educational institutions.

Concept and Scope of Leadership Dynamics in Educational Institutions

The concept and scope of leadership dynamics in educational institutions encompass the multifaceted processes through which leaders influence, motivate, and direct the activities of staff and students toward achieving organizational goals. Leadership dynamics go beyond positional authority, focusing on the interplay of personal qualities, professional skills, and situational strategies that enable leaders to respond effectively to changing institutional needs. In educational contexts, leadership dynamics reflect the capacity to balance administrative efficiency with instructional effectiveness, ensuring that academic standards are met while fostering a supportive and innovative learning environment. This approach emphasizes that leadership is not static but adaptive, requiring continuous reflection, flexibility, and the capacity to manage complex human and material resources (Okeke & Nwankwo, 2023).

In Nigerian educational institutions, leadership dynamics are shaped by socio-cultural, economic, and political factors that influence how leaders perform their roles. For example, the leader of a public secondary school may need to navigate issues such as inadequate funding, infrastructural decay, and policy inconsistency, while simultaneously motivating teachers and engaging with the community to support quality education delivery. The scope of leadership in this context extends to instructional leadership, administrative coordination, resource mobilization, conflict resolution, and fostering collaborative partnerships among stakeholders. Effective leaders understand that their influence is amplified through transparent communication, participatory decision-making, and the strategic alignment of institutional goals with national educational priorities (Emeh & Odu, 2024).

Furthermore, leadership dynamics in education involve responding proactively to global trends such as digital transformation, inclusive education, and quality assurance demands. Leaders must not only manage existing structures but also anticipate future challenges and opportunities, ensuring that their institutions remain competitive and relevant. This adaptive approach requires a deep understanding of pedagogical principles, organizational behaviour, and policy frameworks, which enables leaders to drive sustainable improvements in teaching

and learning outcomes. As highlighted by Adeyemi and Olatunji (2023), leadership in educational institutions is a transformative force that shapes institutional culture, influences staff performance, and ultimately determines the quality of graduates produced. Therefore, the scope of leadership dynamics is broad and integrative, encompassing both the operational and visionary aspects of managing educational institutions in an era of rapid change.

Principles and Frameworks of Quality Assurance in Education

Quality assurance in education has become an indispensable element in maintaining and enhancing the standards of teaching, learning, and institutional management across educational systems worldwide. It is anchored on foundational principles that ensure educational institutions deliver services that meet the expectations of learners, employers, regulators, and society at large. At its core, quality assurance involves systematic processes designed to monitor, evaluate, and improve all aspects of educational provision, ensuring that outcomes align with clearly defined standards and objectives (Uzochukwu & Nnamdi, 2023). This systematic approach not only promotes accountability but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement, thereby positioning education as a catalyst for national development and global competitiveness.

The principles underpinning quality assurance in education emphasize transparency, consistency, inclusivity, and relevance. Transparency demands that processes and criteria for evaluation are clearly articulated and accessible to all stakeholders, which builds trust and engagement within the educational community. Consistency ensures that quality standards are uniformly applied, preventing disparities in educational delivery across institutions and programmes. Inclusivity recognizes the diverse needs of learners and stakeholders, advocating for participatory approaches that accommodate different perspectives and experiences (Eze & Agbo, 2024). Moreover, relevance insists that education remains aligned with societal needs and evolving labour market demands, ensuring graduates possess the skills and knowledge required for meaningful participation in the economy.

Frameworks for quality assurance vary globally but generally incorporate a combination of internal and external mechanisms. Internally, institutions are expected to develop robust quality management systems involving self-assessment, peer review, and continuous feedback loops that engage faculty, students, and administrators. Externally, regulatory bodies such as accreditation agencies, government ministries, and professional councils oversee compliance with national and international benchmarks (Okoye & Chukwuemeka, 2023). In Nigeria, for example, the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) serve critical roles in establishing minimum academic standards and conducting periodic accreditation visits to ensure adherence to quality parameters.

The effective implementation of quality assurance frameworks requires leadership commitment, adequate resources, and an institutional culture that values evidence-based decision-making. As Ajayi and Oladipo (2024) argue, quality assurance is not a one-time event but an ongoing process that integrates evaluation into the fabric of institutional operations. By embedding quality assurance principles within educational policies and daily practices, institutions can safeguard the integrity of academic programmes, enhance student learning experiences, and strengthen public confidence in the education system. This integrative approach underscores the indispensable link between leadership dynamics and quality assurance, as strong leadership provides the vision, coordination, and motivation necessary to sustain quality improvement initiatives in educational institutions.

Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Quality Assurance Practices

Leadership styles significantly influence the effectiveness of quality assurance practices in educational institutions. The way leaders engage with staff, make decisions, and implement policies shapes the culture and operational efficiency necessary for sustaining high educational standards. Various leadership styles offer distinct approaches to motivating stakeholders, managing resources, and driving quality improvement initiatives, each with its advantages and limitations in the context of educational quality assurance (Adebayo & Olaniyan, 2024). These styles are crucial for educational leaders aiming to align institutional goals with quality benchmarks while fostering an environment conducive to continuous improvement.

1. ***Transformational Leadership***: Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their teams by articulating a compelling vision, encouraging innovation, and fostering professional growth among staff members. This leadership style positively impacts quality assurance by promoting a shared commitment to excellence and facilitating change management processes necessary for continuous improvement (Okafor & Nwosu, 2023). Transformational leaders tend to engage stakeholders in reflective practices and collaborative problem-solving, which strengthens internal quality assurance mechanisms and encourages adaptability to emerging educational challenges.
2. ***Transactional Leadership***: Transactional leadership is characterized by a focus on structure, clear roles, and reward-punishment systems to achieve compliance with established standards. While this style can enhance quality assurance by ensuring adherence to rules and accountability frameworks, it may limit creativity and intrinsic motivation among educators (Adesina & Balogun, 2022). In educational institutions, transactional leadership is often effective in maintaining routine quality control measures but may not sufficiently support innovation or long-term transformational changes needed for advancing quality assurance.
3. ***Servant Leadership***: Servant leadership emphasizes the leader's role as a facilitator who prioritizes the needs of staff and students, promoting a

participatory and empathetic approach to institutional management. This style fosters a supportive environment that encourages open communication and shared responsibility for quality assurance outcomes (Ibrahim & Musa, 2023). By valuing collaboration and ethical considerations, servant leaders contribute to a culture of trust and accountability, which is essential for sustaining quality initiatives.

4. ***Democratic Leadership***: Democratic leaders engage stakeholders in decision-making processes, promoting inclusivity and collective ownership of quality assurance efforts. This participatory approach enhances transparency and encourages diverse perspectives in setting and monitoring quality standards (Eze & Okeke, 2024). Democratic leadership is linked with higher levels of staff motivation and commitment to quality improvement, as individuals feel valued and empower/ed to contribute meaningfully.

5. ***Laissez-Faire Leadership***: Laissez-faire leadership involves minimal direct intervention by leaders, granting autonomy to staff members to manage their responsibilities. While this can foster innovation and professional autonomy, it risks neglecting structured quality assurance processes if oversight is insufficient (Oluwafemi & Adeola, 2023). In educational settings, excessive laissez-faire leadership may lead to inconsistencies in quality standards and a lack of coordinated efforts to address institutional challenges.

Therefore, leadership styles distinctly shape how quality assurance practices are conceptualized, implemented, and sustained within educational institutions. Transformational and democratic leadership styles tend to foster dynamic and participatory quality assurance cultures, whereas transactional and laissez-faire styles may either emphasize compliance or risk organizational neglect. Servant leadership bridges these approaches by focusing on ethical engagement and community-building, which are crucial for effective quality assurance. Educational leaders must therefore critically assess and adapt leadership styles that meet the evolving demands of quality assurance and institutional excellence.

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaborative Leadership for Quality Improvement

Stakeholder engagement and collaborative leadership are critical components in advancing quality improvement within educational institutions. The increasing complexity of educational environments demands leadership approaches that go beyond top-down directives to embrace participatory practices involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, administrative staff, policymakers, and the community at large. Effective engagement of these stakeholders creates a shared sense of ownership and responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the quality of education, which ultimately translates into improved learning outcomes and institutional sustainability (Ezeani & Okoro, 2024). Collaborative leadership, therefore, acts as a catalyst for harnessing collective expertise and resources to address challenges and innovate practices that promote continuous quality assurance.

The significance of stakeholder engagement in education lies in its capacity to bring multiple perspectives into the quality assurance process, fostering transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. When stakeholders are actively involved, they contribute valuable insights that help identify gaps in service delivery and suggest contextually relevant solutions. This inclusive approach aligns with contemporary quality assurance frameworks, which emphasize the importance of participatory evaluation and feedback mechanisms as integral to institutional effectiveness (Ugochukwu & Onwubuya, 2023). In Nigerian educational settings, where resource constraints and systemic challenges are prevalent, collaborative leadership models facilitate the pooling of resources and knowledge, strengthening the capacity of institutions to meet national and global quality standards (Chukwuemeka & Afolabi, 2024).

Collaborative leadership is characterized by shared decision-making, mutual respect, and a commitment to collective goals. Leaders who adopt this style encourage dialogue and build partnerships across different groups, creating an environment conducive to innovation and continuous improvement. Research by Adeyemi and Nwachukwu (2023) highlights that collaborative leadership fosters trust and reduces resistance to change, which are common barriers to implementing quality assurance initiatives. Moreover, it enhances the professional development of staff through peer learning and mentorship, contributing to a culture that values excellence and accountability.

The dynamic interaction between stakeholder engagement and collaborative leadership is essential for embedding quality assurance into the everyday practices of educational institutions. Leaders who effectively engage stakeholders create feedback loops that inform policy adjustments, curriculum development, and resource allocation. This cyclical process ensures that quality improvement is responsive to evolving educational demands and that institutional strategies remain relevant and effective (Nwankwo & Eze, 2024). Consequently, fostering a collaborative leadership culture supported by broad stakeholder engagement is not only a practical necessity but also a strategic imperative for educational institutions committed to achieving and sustaining high-quality standards.

Ethical Leadership and Accountability in Upholding Educational Quality

Ethical leadership and accountability are fundamental pillars in upholding and advancing educational quality in institutions worldwide. In an era where transparency, integrity, and social responsibility are increasingly demanded by stakeholders, educational leaders must exemplify ethical behaviour and foster an environment of accountability to ensure trust and credibility. Ethical leadership involves guiding institutions with principles that prioritize fairness, respect, honesty, and commitment to the welfare of all members of the educational community (Okoye & Umeh, 2022). Accountability, on the other hand, refers to the obligation of educational leaders and staff to justify their actions, accept

responsibility for outcomes, and adhere to established standards and regulations (Adebisi & Oladunjoye, 2023). Together, these concepts underpin effective quality assurance systems that promote sustainable institutional development and improved student outcomes.

1. ***Promotion of Integrity and Transparency:*** Ethical leadership demands that educational leaders conduct institutional affairs with openness and honesty, thereby minimizing corruption, favouritism, and malpractice. Such transparency builds stakeholder confidence in the quality and credibility of the institution's programmes and processes (Ibrahim & Musa, 2021). Leaders who promote integrity also create an ethical climate that discourages academic dishonesty and unethical behaviour among staff and students, which directly supports the institution's quality assurance efforts (Eze & Okafor, 2023).
2. ***Responsibility and Answerability:*** Accountability ensures that all members of the institution, particularly those in leadership positions, are responsible for their decisions and actions. This includes managing resources prudently, implementing policies effectively, and meeting educational goals (Nwosu & Chukwuma, 2024). When leaders embrace accountability, they encourage a culture where feedback and evaluation are welcomed, enabling continuous quality improvement.
3. ***Fairness and Equity:*** Ethical leaders promote fairness in decision-making processes, ensuring that policies and practices do not discriminate against any group. This equitable treatment fosters an inclusive environment conducive to learning and professional growth (Adeyemi & Olatunji, 2023). Fairness also ensures that quality assurance mechanisms address the needs of diverse learners and stakeholders, enhancing institutional effectiveness.
4. ***Building Trust and Legitimacy:*** Ethical leadership and accountability contribute to building trust between educational institutions and their stakeholders, including students, parents, regulatory agencies, and the wider community. This trust is critical for securing support, funding, and cooperation necessary for quality assurance activities (Chukwuemeka & Eze, 2022). Institutions perceived as trustworthy are more likely to attract qualified staff and motivated students, which positively influences educational outcomes.
5. ***Ethical Decision-Making and Policy Implementation:*** Leaders who apply ethical principles in decision-making promote policies that uphold academic standards and quality assurance objectives. This involves balancing competing interests while maintaining a focus on the institution's mission and values (Ajayi & Oladipo, 2024). Ethical decision-making ensures that quality assurance policies are implemented consistently and fairly, reinforcing institutional integrity.

Therefore, ethical leadership and accountability are indispensable to sustaining quality in education. They create the foundation upon which effective quality assurance systems operate, fostering a culture of responsibility, trust, and continuous improvement. For educational institutions to meet contemporary

challenges and stakeholder expectations, leaders must embody ethical values and uphold accountability in all facets of their work.

Challenges and Barriers to Effective Leadership in Quality Assurance

Effective leadership in quality assurance within educational institutions is vital for maintaining high standards and fostering continuous improvement. However, leaders often encounter numerous challenges and barriers that impede their ability to implement and sustain quality assurance initiatives successfully. These obstacles range from systemic issues, resource constraints, to human factors that collectively undermine leadership efficacy and institutional progress (Olusanya & Akinlade, 2023). These challenges are essential for developing strategies that enhance leadership capacity and promote resilient quality assurance frameworks.

1. ***Inadequate Funding and Resource Limitations:*** One of the most pervasive challenges is the insufficient allocation of financial and material resources to support quality assurance activities. Leaders often struggle to implement necessary reforms, acquire modern technologies, and provide adequate training due to budgetary constraints (Okeke & Nwankwo, 2022). This scarcity hampers efforts to maintain infrastructural standards and deliver quality education.
2. ***Resistance to Change Among Staff:*** Resistance from academic and administrative staff poses a significant barrier to leadership efforts aimed at quality improvement. Change management requires leaders to overcome entrenched attitudes, skepticism, and fear of increased accountability, which can delay or derail quality assurance reforms (Eze & Onuoha, 2023). Without staff buy-in, the implementation of new policies and practices often lacks the necessary momentum.
3. ***Lack of Professional Development and Training:*** Effective leadership in quality assurance demands continuous capacity building. Yet, many educational leaders and staff lack access to relevant training programs that equip them with updated knowledge and skills to manage quality processes efficiently (Adeyemi & Olatunji, 2023). This gap limits their ability to respond proactively to emerging educational challenges.
4. ***Poor Communication and Stakeholder Engagement:*** Ineffective communication channels and inadequate involvement of key stakeholders undermine leadership efforts to build consensus and shared responsibility for quality assurance. When stakeholders are excluded or insufficiently informed, it leads to misunderstandings, mistrust, and fragmented efforts towards quality improvement (Chukwuemeka & Nwogu, 2024).
5. ***Bureaucratic Bottlenecks and Policy Inconsistencies:*** Leaders often face rigid bureaucratic structures and inconsistent policies that restrict their autonomy and delay decision-making processes. These systemic inefficiencies reduce the flexibility required for timely interventions and innovation in quality assurance (Uzochukwu & Nnamdi, 2023).

6. ***Inadequate Data Management and Monitoring Systems:*** Reliable data is essential for evidence-based quality assurance. However, many institutions lack robust data collection and monitoring mechanisms, which limits leaders' ability to track progress, identify weaknesses, and make informed decisions (Oluwatobi & Akinyemi, 2024).

Therefore, the challenges to effective leadership in quality assurance are multifaceted, involving financial, human, systemic, and technological dimensions. These barriers require comprehensive strategies that include increased investment, capacity building, inclusive communication, and policy reforms. Enhancing leadership effectiveness in quality assurance will ultimately improve educational outcomes and institutional credibility.

Innovative Leadership Approaches for Sustaining Quality in the 21st Century

In the rapidly evolving educational setting of the 21st century, sustaining quality in educational institutions demands innovative leadership approaches that respond effectively to emerging challenges and opportunities. Traditional leadership models, while still relevant, often lack the agility and creativity required to navigate complex global trends such as digital transformation, globalization, and shifting learner expectations (Adebayo & Olaniyan, 2024). Innovative leadership embraces adaptability, collaboration, and technology integration, enabling educational leaders to foster environments that prioritize continuous improvement, inclusivity, and excellence. These approaches are critical for maintaining competitive and relevant educational standards in a world marked by rapid change.

1. ***Transformational and Visionary Leadership:*** Transformational leadership remains a cornerstone of innovation, where leaders inspire change by articulating a clear vision and motivating stakeholders to pursue shared goals. Visionary leaders anticipate future trends and strategically position their institutions to embrace new opportunities, ensuring long-term sustainability of quality (Okafor & Nwosu, 2023).
2. ***Technology-Driven Leadership:*** The integration of digital technologies into leadership practices has revolutionized quality assurance and institutional management. Leaders who leverage data analytics, online learning platforms, and communication tools enhance decision-making, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement (Ezeani & Nwogu, 2023). Technology-driven leadership fosters transparency and real-time monitoring, which are essential for continuous quality improvement.
3. ***Collaborative and Distributed Leadership:*** Innovative leadership increasingly emphasizes collaboration across hierarchical levels and among diverse stakeholders. Distributed leadership models share authority and responsibility, empowering teachers, students, and administrative staff to contribute actively to quality assurance processes (Adeyemi & Nwachukwu, 2023). This inclusivity strengthens institutional resilience and fosters a culture of collective ownership.

4. ***Adaptive Leadership:*** Adaptive leaders excel in navigating uncertainty and complexity by encouraging experimentation, learning from failures, and responding flexibly to changing conditions. This approach is crucial in addressing the dynamic demands of educational quality, especially in resource-constrained environments (Oluwafemi & Adeola, 2023).

5. ***Ethical and Sustainable Leadership:*** Sustainability in quality assurance is supported by leadership that upholds ethical standards and promotes social responsibility. Ethical leaders build trust and legitimacy while ensuring that quality initiatives align with broader societal goals such as equity, access, and community development (Ajayi & Oladipo, 2024).

6. ***Innovative Capacity Building and Professional Development:*** Leaders who prioritize continuous learning and capacity building foster an institutional culture that embraces innovation. This includes promoting professional development programmes that equip staff with skills to implement cutting-edge teaching, assessment, and quality assurance practices (Ibrahim & Musa, 2023).

Policy Implications and Recommendations for Educational Leaders

Policy formulation and implementation are critical drivers of educational quality, and educational leaders play a pivotal role in interpreting, shaping, and executing these policies to achieve institutional goals. The dynamic nature of the educational sector requires leaders to not only comply with existing regulations but also proactively advocate for policies that promote innovation, equity, and sustainable quality assurance systems. A clear understanding the policy implications, coupled with the adoption of strategic recommendations, equips leaders to effectively navigate complexities, strengthen institutional effectiveness, and respond proactively to evolving societal needs (Ugochukwu & Onwubuya, 2023).

1. ***Strengthen Leadership Capacity Through Continuous Professional Development:*** Educational policies should prioritize capacity building for leaders by providing ongoing training and development opportunities. This ensures that leaders are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills necessary for effective quality assurance and institutional management (Adeyemi & Nwachukwu, 2023).

2. ***Promote Inclusive and Participatory Policy-Making Processes:*** Leaders are encouraged to foster stakeholder engagement in policy formulation and implementation. Inclusive policies that reflect diverse perspectives enhance ownership and commitment to quality improvement initiatives across the educational community (Ezeani & Okoro, 2024).

3. ***Enhance Funding and Resource Allocation for Quality Assurance Activities:*** Policy frameworks must address the chronic underfunding of education by ensuring adequate financial and infrastructural support for quality assurance programmes. Sustainable funding enables the deployment of modern technologies and the recruitment of qualified personnel vital for maintaining high standards (Okeke & Nwankwo, 2022).

4. ***Institutionalize Robust Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:*** Policies should mandate systematic monitoring and evaluation processes within institutions to track progress and inform decision-making. Educational leaders must utilize data-driven approaches to assess effectiveness and identify areas for improvement (Oluwatobi & Akinyemi, 2024).

5. ***Encourage Ethical Leadership and Accountability Frameworks:*** Educational policies must emphasize ethical conduct and accountability among leaders and staff. Clear guidelines and enforcement mechanisms support transparency and integrity, which are essential for fostering trust and upholding educational quality (Adebisi & Oladunjoye, 2023).

6. ***Support Innovation and Technology Integration in Quality Assurance:*** Policies should facilitate the adoption of digital tools and innovative practices in quality assurance processes. Leaders must be empowered to leverage technology for enhanced communication, data management, and instructional delivery (Eze & Agbo, 2024).

7. ***Facilitate Collaboration and Partnerships Across Educational Stakeholders:*** Policies encouraging inter-institutional collaboration, partnerships with industry, and community involvement strengthen the resource base and relevance of educational programmes. Such partnerships support quality enhancement and prepare students for real-world challenges (Chukwuemeka & Afolabi, 2024).

Conclusion

In conclusion, leadership dynamics and the principles of quality assurance remain foundational to the advancement and sustainability of educational institutions. Effective leadership not only shapes institutional vision and culture but also drives the implementation of quality assurance frameworks that ensure continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and administrative processes. As the educational system becomes increasingly complex due to technological innovations, globalization, and changing societal expectations, the interplay between leadership styles, stakeholder engagement, and ethical accountability has never been more critical.

Way Forward

Looking forward, future research in leadership and quality assurance should explore emerging trends such as the integration of artificial intelligence and data analytics in educational management, the impact of remote and hybrid learning models on quality standards, and the role of global partnerships in fostering cross-cultural quality assurance practices. Moreover, there is a need for longitudinal studies that examine how leadership development programs influence quality outcomes over time, especially in under-resourced settings typical of many developing countries (Ezeani & Okoro, 2024). Investigating the ethical dimensions of leadership in increasingly diverse and digital learning environments also represents a promising avenue for future inquiry.

Ultimately, advancing the field requires a multidisciplinary approach that bridges theory and practice, incorporating insights from educational psychology, organizational behaviour, technology, and policy studies. By focusing on innovative leadership strategies and robust quality assurance mechanisms, future research can provide actionable frameworks that empower educational leaders to navigate complexity and foster excellence in education globally. This will not only enhance institutional credibility but also contribute significantly to national development and global competitiveness.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND MENTORSHIP IN SCIENCE EDUCATION: FOSTERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCIENTISTS

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Introduction

Science Education is a vital component of modern society, driving innovation, technological advancement and economic growth. Effective leadership and mentorship play a critical role in shaping the next generation of scientists (National Science Foundation, 2020).

This article explores the history, importance of mentorship and leadership dynamics in science education, highlighting best practices, benefits and challenges. It also includes leadership challenges in science education in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.

History

The term educational leadership and mentorship came into currency in the late 20^{th} century for several reasons; demands were made on schools for higher levels of pupil achievement and schools were expected to improve and reform. These expectations were accompanied by cells for accountability at school level. Maintenance of the status quo was no longer considered acceptable.

Administration and management are terms that connote stability through the exercise of control and supervision. The concept of leadership was favoured because it conveys dynamism and proactivity (Fafunwa, 1974). The principal or school head is seen to be the school leader; however, school leadership may include other persons such as members of a formal leadership team and other persons contribute towards the aim of school while school leadership or educational leadership have become popular as replacements for educational administration in recent years. Leadership presents only a partial picture of the work of school division or distinct and ministerial or state education agency personnel, not to mention the areas of research explored by higher institution faculty in departments concerned with the operation of schools and educational institutions. On this view, the term is understood as having been borrowed from business (Karanxha, 2013). Educational leadership and mentorship draw upon interdisciplinary literature, generally but ideally distinguishes itself through its focus in pedagogy, epistemology and human development (Karanxha 2013). In fact,

researchers have explored how different practices and actions impact students' achievements or other elements related to school management (NRC & NAS, 1995).

A number of publications and foundations are now devoted to studying the particular requirements of leadership in these settings. This educational leadership is taught as an academic discipline on a number of universities. Several countries now have explicit polices on school leadership including policies and budgets for the training and development of school leaders (Ajaye, et al, 1996).

Importance of Mentorship in Science Education

Mentorship is a powerful tool in science education, providing students with guideline, support and inspiration. According to a study by the National Academy of Science (2019), mentorship can have a significant impact on students' academic and professionals' success, particularly for underrepresented groups in science education. Mentors can help students to navigate complex scientific concepts, explore career options, and develop essential skills (Harrison & Lee, 2018). Specifically, mentorship provides the following benefits:

1. Mentors serve as role models;
2. inspiring and motivating students to pursue career in science education. Women who are underrepresented in STEM fields can especially benefit from female mentors who can provide guidance and support.;
3. Mentorship helps students develop essential skills such as communication, problem-solving and decision making which are vital for effective, leadership in STEM fields;
4. Mentors can encourage students to reflect on their experiences, identify strengths and weakness, and set goals for improvement, leading to increased confidence and self-awareness.

Effective Mentorship Practices can be Established by the Following Practices

Mentor education: This provides mentors with training and education on effective mentorship methods, including cultural responsiveness and strategies for working with diverse students (Byars-Winston & Foyad, 2006).

Small group discussion: This utilizes small group discussion to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and promote mentorship (Kran & Isabella, 1985).

Clear expectations: Establish clear expectations and goals for the mentorship relationship, ensuring both parties are aligned and working towards common objectives (Johnson, 2007).

Benefits of Mentorship in Science Education

1. Increased students' confidence and self-efficacy in STEM fields (Lent et al., 2018).
2. Providing students with opportunities to explore various STEM careers and gain insight into industry trends (Brown & Lent, 2017).

3. Mentors can introduce students to professional networks, potentially leading to internships, research opportunities, or job placement (Packard, 2003).

Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Effective Mentorship Programmes in Science Education

1. Limited resources and funding for mentorship programs (National Science Foundation, 2020).
2. Time constraints and competing demands on mentors and mentees (Johnson, 2007).
3. Diversity and inclusion; ensuring diversity and inclusion in mentorship programs, particularly for underrepresented groups in STEM (Byars – Winston & Fouad, 2006).

Leadership Dynamics in Science Education

Effective leadership in science education involves creating an environment that fosters curiosity, creativity and critical thinking. Leaders in science education should prioritise mentorship, providing opportunities for students to work within experienced professionals and develop their skills.

Leadership dynamics can also influence the culture and climate of science departments shaping the way students perceive science and their place with in it. (Borrego et al, 2013).

Key Aspect of Leadership Dynamics in Science Education include:

1. Visionary Leadership: Leaders in science education should have a clear vision for the future, inspiring and motivating students and staff (Kolter, 2001).
2. Collaborative leadership: This fosters a sense of community, encouraging faculty and students to work together to achieve common goals. (Borego et al, 2019).
3. Leaders in science education should encourage innovation, supporting the development of new teaching methods, research initiatives and technologies (National Science Foundation, 2020).
4. Implementing effective leadership dynamics programmes in science education can present several challenges and opportunities just like mentorship programmes. These include;
5. Limited resources, balancing leadership development with other demands on faculty and students time can also be challenging.
6. Another challenges could be ensuring that leadership dynamics are inclusive and addresses the needs of diverse faculty and students (Byar-Winston & Fouad, 2006).

Benefits of Effective Leadership Dynamics

It leads to improved students' outcomes, including increased academic achievements and career success (Lent et al, 2018). Also, collaborative leadership can increase faculty satisfaction, reducing turn over and improving job satisfaction

(Austin, 2002). Furthermore, innovative leadership can enhance research productivity, supporting the development of new discoveries and technologies (National Science Foundation, 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, leadership dynamics play a vital role in science education, influencing the quality of teaching, learning and research. By prioritizing visionary leadership, collaborative leadership, mentorship and innovation, leaders in science education can create a supportive and inclusive environment that foster the growth of future scientists and leaders.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

LEADERSHIP AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS OF NIGERIA

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Introduction

There is no doubt that just as conflicts abound in human beings so it is in tertiary institutions. It is an inherent aspect of every organization. Effective leadership and management play pivotal role in navigating through the tensions associated with conflict and even transforming potential disruptions into opportunities for growth and innovation. Whether sparked by miscommunication, competing priorities, or clashing personalities, conflict can either fracture teams or fuel transformation. The difference lies in leadership. Leadership is not merely about directing workers but also about cultivating environments where differences are acknowledged and issues are addressed with intelligence and strategic foresight. Chukwusa (2024). noted that many leaders underestimate the importance of conflict management, assuming it will resolve itself or fearing it's beyond control. But, the ability to confront and guide conflict is a defining trait of effective leadership.

Leaders who embrace conflict as a catalyst for dialogue and change foster resilient and high-performing teams. Hence, Cheta-Maclean and Tobins (2023) believed that when leaders adopt proactive conflict management approaches, they not only mitigate negative outcomes such as insubordination and reduced job satisfaction but also unlock creative potential within their organizations. Therefore, this chapter delved into effective management of conflict by leaders to build trust, drive innovation and maintain a cohesive organizational harmony using the following sub headings:

a. Leadership in tertiary institution
b. Leadership and Management
c. Conflict and causes
d. Types of conflict leaders encounter in tertiary institution

e. Leadership roles in conflict management
f. Conclusion
g. Way forward for leaders in conflict management in tertiary institutions

Leadership in tertiary institution

Leadership is all about influencing, guiding, and empowering others toward achieving a shared goal. Leadership is defined by actions, vision, and the ability to inspire. Ankeli (2023) expands this view by emphasizing that leadership is a dynamic blend of mindsets and behaviors that align people in a collective direction, foster collaboration, and enable adaptability in the face of change. This indicates that leadership involves the process of social influence, whereby a person enlists the support and cooperation of others to accomplish a common objective. It is rooted in vision, integrity, and the capacity to inspire action. Based on this, Ehule and Ehule (2021) viewed leadership to involve inspiring a shared vision, setting clear objectives, and creating an environment where people can thrive. This means that leadership involves empowering others, building relationships, and navigating change. A true leader adapts to challenges and fosters autonomy and accountability within their team.

Effective leadership is recognized as key to the success of any organization including educational organization like tertiary institutions. It is worthy of note that tertiary institutions comprising universities, polytechnics, Colleges of Technology and Colleges of Education, occupy important position in academia and play pivotal roles in the development of the nation through the provision of well groomed manpower. However, there cannot be progress without peace. By implication, peace and progress are interwoven and by inference, no meaningful development can take place in a conflict ridden system. Kannike (2024) posited that leadership in tertiary institutions plays a pivotal role in shaping the academic, administrative, and societal outcomes of higher education in addition to creating a peaceful atmosphere for these to thrive. According to Okobia and Paul (2022), leadership in tertiary institutions must be proactive and inclusive to navigate the complexities of institutional governance. It must be transparent and participatory so as to build up trust and reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings that often escalate into conflict. Okobia and Paul identified the following leadership practices in tertiary institutions as summarized below:

a. Vision and mission alignment of institutional goals with national education policies and global academic standards
b. Policy formulation and implementation
c. Resource mobilization
d. Capacity building
e. Delegation and empowerment
f. Conflict resolution
g. Ensuring quality assurance and accountability

h. Innovation and entrepreneurship
i. Collaborative governance

It should be noted that in carrying out these practices, leaders are bound to face conflicts, therefore, conflict management is a must study for every leader. Chukwusa (2024) believe that leaders who possess conflict management skills are better equipped to transform disputes into opportunities for institutional growth. This according to Chukwusa involves recognizing the sources of conflict, facilitating dialogue, and implementing fair resolution mechanisms. Therefore, the integration of conflict management into leadership practices is very essential for institutional stability and progress.

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management are very important for the success of any tertiary institution. Most often they intertwine but they are distinct in their core function. Mottone (2022) stated that leadership primarily about setting a vision, inspiring people and driving change. Hence, leaders are visionaries who influence and motivate others to achieve shared goals. Management on the other hand is focused on planning, organizing and coordinating resources to achieve specific objectives. Ogogor (2023) opined that managers are tasked with maintaining oder, implementing processes and ensuring operational efficiency. This implies that while leaders guides and gives direction, managers execute the vision through the system. Despite the differences, leadership and management have common characteristics. Both require strong communication skills, decision making capacities and a commitment to achieving organizational goals. Some researchers argue that leaders and managers have distinct roles and responsibilities while others assert that leadership and management are complementary and it would be difficult to separate them in the words of Hayaudin (2024). Leaders often need to manage and managers must lead especially in dynamic environment such as tertiary institutions.

Effective leaders and managers in tertiary institutions must be able to motivate staff and students, resolve conflicts and foster collaboration. in doing this, leaders focus on fostering open communication, empathy and trust among members of the organization while managers approach conflict with a more structured and procedural mindset, by identifying the root cause of dispute, enforcing policies and ensuring that resolution align with organizational objectives. Hence, while leaders rely on influence and emotional intelligence, managers often depend on formal authority and conflict resolution frameworks (Osabiya, 2015). In essence, leadership and management converge in conflict management in tertiary institution through their shared goal of maintaining a functional and harmonious institution. Leaders inspire resolution through vision and empathy while managers oversee to its implementation and accountability.

Conflict and causes

Conflict in tertiary institutions is a multifaceted phenomenon that arises from the dynamic interactions among students, staff, and management. These institutions, by their nature, are melting pots of diverse backgrounds, ideologies, and expectations, making conflict almost inevitable. Cheta-Maclean and Tobins (2023) defined conflict as the existence of non-compatibility or disagreements between two actors (Individuals, groups, organizations or nations) in their interaction over the issues of interests, values, beliefs, emotions, goals, space, positions, scarce resources and so on. When people work and interact together in organizations, conflicts are bound to ensue and things do not always turn the way people want it to be. This is why Osabiya (2015) described conflict as a manifestation of difference between two or more persons or groups characterized by tension, disagreement, emotion, or polarization, where bonding is broken or lacking. Organizational conflicts are a natural occurrence in all organizations, whether the organization is small or big.

Traditionally, the concept conflict suggested something bad. When people thought of conflict, they thought of two people or groups of people who were involved in heated arguments. However, time and knowledge have changed the way people view conflict. In these modern days, conflict can be viewed to be either negative or positive depending on its usefulness to the organizations. Osakede, Ijimakinwa, Adesanya and Ojo (2018) noted that conflict in itself is not bad because it strengthens organizational effectiveness. However, leaders have come to recognize that though conflict can be a major problem in organizational effectiveness, nonetheless, certain kinds of conflict may be beneficial to the progress of organizations. Hence, Chukwusa (2024) submitted that conflict in tertiary institutions can be both constructive and destructive, depending on how it is managed; pointing out that constructive conflict may stimulate innovation and institutional reform, while destructive conflict can lead to strikes, violence, and academic disruption.

Organizational conflict can manifest in variety of ways which include: competition with one another, jealousy, shouting at one another, or withdraw from organizational performance. Chukwusa outlined the following as causes of conflict in tertiary institutions which manifest in various forms, often reflecting the complex interplay between students, staff, and administration. They include:

i. Student-Staff Conflict: this stems from academic grievances, disciplinary actions, or perceived injustices in grading and treatment. Students may feel marginalized or unheard, leading to protests or confrontations. Such conflicts often result in prolonged academic calendars, destruction of property, and a breakdown in institutional harmony. These conflicts are exacerbated when communication channels between students and staff are weak or authoritarian, leaving little room for dialogue or negotiation.

ii. Inter-Staff Conflict: This occurs among academic or non-academic staff. These disputes may be rooted in competition for promotions, allocation of resources, or ideological differences. In some cases, conflicts arise due to perceived favoritism or lack of transparency in administrative decisions. Chukwusa noted that such internal conflicts can affect institutional performance and morale, especially when left unresolved. He emphasizes that while conflict is inevitable, its management that determines whether it becomes a destructive force or a catalyst for institutional growth.
iii. Management-staff conflict is another common form, often triggered by disagreements over working conditions, salaries, or institutional policies. In Nigeria, this form of conflict is frequently observed in the recurring disputes between university management and academic unions such as ASUU. These conflicts can lead to strikes, which severely disrupt academic calendars and institutional operations. Osakede., Ijimakinwa, Adesanya and Ojo, (2018).highlighted that ineffective conflict management strategies by the government and institutional leaders contribute to prolonged industrial actions, affecting both staff welfare and student outcomes,
iv. Student-student conflict is another conflict that may arise from ethnic, religious, or political differences, as well as competition in academic or social spheres. In multicultural environments, identity-based tensions can escalate into violence or social exclusion. Odionyeme and Wichendu (2021) opined that such conflicts, if not addressed through inclusive policies and dialogue, can undermine the sense of community and safety within institutions Promoting tolerance and intercultural understanding is essential to mitigating these tensions and fostering a peaceful learning environment.
v. Institutional conflict refers to broader systemic issues that affect the entire tertiary institution. These include policy disputes between the institution and external bodies such as government agencies, accreditation boards, or funding organizations. Such conflicts often revolve around autonomy, funding, and regulatory compliance. Chukwusa (2024) asserted that institutional conflicts can hinder development and innovation if not managed through strategic negotiation and stakeholder engagement. Addressing these conflicts requires a proactive approach that balances institutional goals with external expectations, ensuring sustainable progress and academic excellence.

Types of conflict leaders encounter in tertiary institution

Conflicts in tertiary institutions are growing in number, kind, and complexity and becoming more challenging, hence leaders need to be conversant with various forms of conflict to be expected so that they won't be caught unawares and how to manage them as leaders so that it won't degenerate and collapse the institution. Ololube (2019) identified the following types of conflict which a leader should expect to encounter even in tertiary institutions:

a. **Functional or Constructive Conflict**: It is viewed as a confrontation between two ideas, goals and parties that improve employees and organizational performance This type of conflict supports the goals of the group and improves its performance with regards to its functional and constructive forms. It leads to regular competition among group members and the groups work harder to produce more, which is advantageous to the group and the organization. One of the main benefits of constructive conflict is that it gives its members a chance to identify the problems and see the opportunities. Also, it can inspire to new ideas, learning, and growth among individuals (Serenko, 2019).

b. **Dysfunctional/Destructive Conflict**: These are conflicts that hamper group performance and they are dysfunctional or destructive forms of conflict in organizations (Ololube, 2019). This type of conflict is characterized by the competing individual interests that override the overall interest of the organization. Sectional leaders at this stage withhold information from one another and employees at this state sabotage one another for selfish interest, either through intentional or subtle means. This can tear the employee's relationships apart, which might interfere with the exchange of ideas, needed information and the resources available amongst groups and between departments. Dysfunctional conflict hinders and prevents organizational goals from being achieved. It usually hinders organizational performance and leads to decreased productivity.

c. **Relationship Conflict**: This exists when there are interpersonal incompatibilities among group members. These include employee's personality clashes, their tensions, animosity and annoyance. Relationship conflict in organizations produces negative individual emotions, anxiety, mistrust, or resentment which may lead to frustration, tension and fear of being rejected by the organization and other team members .Conflict between the leader and the team is relationship conflict which affects performance. It focuses on interpersonal relationship and can penetrate and damage all aspect of an organization. Mottone (2022) recommended that an open, direct conversation is always the best way to bring issues out in the open and begin working on a resolution.

d. **Task Conflicts**: These are disagreements about the content of a task and work goals, such as distribution of resources, procedures, and interpretation of facts. Task conflicts include differences in viewpoints, ideas and opinions, and may coincide with animated discussions and personal excitement. Task conflict may be associated with several benefits like improving the use of debate within teams), which results in quality ideas and innovation and leads to better service delivery.

e. **Process Conflicts**: This refers to disagreement about how a task should be accomplished, individuals' responsibilities and delegation, for example, when group members disagree about whose responsibility it is to complete a specific duty. Process conflict has been associated with lower morale, decreased productivity and poor team performance (Mottone, 2022) It also relates to how the work gets done. This form of conflict centers around, the process, procedures, steps or

methods used to reach goal. One person might like to plan many steps ahead while others might like to dive in headfirst. These differences in approaches or processes can lead to communication break downs and ultimately conflict.

It is quite evident that conflict can be good or bad depending on the type of conflict. However, too much conflict, though, can produce such undesirable results as hostility and lack of cooperation, which lower performance.

Leadership roles in conflict management

Conflict can bring enormous benefits to employees in the organization if properly handled by leaders. In actual fact, conflict management could be seen as one of the biggest drivers of change in organizational management. Ololube (2019) asserted that conflict in an organization can help people to be more innovative, create stronger bonds, build effective teams, establish strong working relationship and eventually improve individual as well as organizational performance. Conversely, Mottone (2022) indicated that unmanaged conflict negatively impacts both employee job satisfaction and performance. Ankeli (2023) emphasized that when organizational leaders shy away from resolving workplace conflict, it affects organizational performance adversely; it breeds lack of cooperation, wastage of resources and low production capacity. Furthermore, unresolved conflict tends to grow into greater conflicts, and the more it grows the larger the associated problems and the more severe they become leading to low job performance. It therefore beholds on leaders to deal with the very essence of the conflict situations.

The goals of conflict management always seek resolution based on mutual gains and agreement. According to Adebisi and Oladejo (2022) and Stewart (2019), some of the important strategies organizational leaders can use in the management of conflict are summarized below:

Act Responsibly: Leaders have to act responsibly when handling conflict. If leaders are not responsible, respect for the leaders may be affected in their bid to resolve conflict.

Diagnose the Conflict: The diagnosis of conflicts begin with a vivid assessment of the situation that gave rise to the conflict. It is imperative for leaders not to forget the major issues that led to the conflicts in the first place. The leader must make efforts at minimizing or neutralizing the conflict situations. Organizational leaders should remember that they are not in a contest and not all decisions reached will be supported by the employees. Leaders should ensure there is proof of wrongdoing before acting. It is necessary not to create unhealthy conflict resolution situations and not to wait until the situation is beyond reparation (Usendok, 2022). In situations where leaders wait too long to act, conflicting parties will feel that the leader is hesitant to act and take decisions.

Maintain Boundaries: Organizational leaders should assist and support one another in maintaining boundaries in conflict situations. Furthermore, leaders should

possess enough self awareness to keep themselves from crossing boundaries, because awareness of conflict boundaries helps in establishing standards to prevent further conflicts.

Respect Differences: organizational leaders should respect the unique features and skills of those involved in the conflicts. Nonetheless, leaders take side with those they trust the most and do not venture out to capture the diverse skills of their employees. Leader should work towards appreciating the potentials of every employee in the workplace (Ehule, 2021).

Identifying Goals: Leaders should endeavor be careful when addressing only one party's point of view with respect to the conflict situation. Leaders should gather enough information, develop their own self-awareness of the conflict situation, and be ready for the unexpected when the situation arises. The goal for managing conflict situations should be identified and the strategies specific to achieve the identified goal should be implemented. Leaders' strategic approach can assist in staying on course during the conflict resolution.

Respect for All: During resolution of conflict, leaders should consider the needs of the employees or parties affected by the conflict. In other words, for a solution to be lasting, it should meet the needs of all those involved in the conflict. A solution in whereby sectional needs are met at the expense of the needs of the other conflicting group, the resolution decision might not likely last for a long time before another conflict arise (Andrew, 2023).

Participation and Empowerment: Conflict resolution is based on the view that employees have right and obligation to participate in decisions that affect their lives. As such conflict resolution stresses that employees are most likely to achieve their own goals and have rewarding
relationships when they co-operate. In the same vein, organizations will be more productive.

This means that when in conflict, employees should consider each other as allies in helping to create a solution to a common problem rather than enemies who are to be defeated.

Justice: It is necessary that in managing conflict, solutions are just and fair. In conflict justice can be of two kinds: procedural and substantive (Usendok, 2022). Procedural justice means that the procedure in dealing with conflict is fair. Conflict resolution techniques are very useful in ensuring procedure justice, such as ensuring that all the parties or groups affected by the conflict are present. Substantive justice amounts to ensuring that the solutions produced are fair. This, however, is more theoretical than practical.

Believably, conflicts are not always easy to handle, because leaders must manage conflict to ensure that the relationship is not destroyed and justice is maintained. Again, during the time of conflicts, strong emotions tend to roll out, which can hurt employees' feelings, leaders should therefore deal with conflict in a

healthy way so as to increase the understanding among people, build trust and strengthen relationships.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed leadership and conflict management in tertiary institutions of Nigeria. The chapter explores leaderships' function in management, noting that one pertinent area that requires management by leaders is conflict. Conflict is seen as inevitable in any organization, tertiary institutions inclusive. Leadership plays a pivotal role in conflict management within tertiary institutions, where diverse stakeholders—students, faculty, and administrative staff—interact daily. In managing conflict, institutional leaders must act as mediators and facilitators. Their role involves not only resolving disputes but also transforming conflict into opportunities for growth. They must prioritize clear communication and transparency in resolving conflict to prevent misunderstandings that may affect organizations' growth. The under listed way forward is therefore suggested for good management of conflict by leaders in tertiary institutions.

Way forward for leaders in conflict management in tertiary institutions

The following are suggestions for tertiary institutions' conflict management by leaders in order to maintain good staff relationship and attain organization goals:

1. For proper running and optimum productivity, leaders should ensure that staff welfare is taken into consideration.
2. Leaders should ensure that conflict resolution workshops and seminars are regularly organized for staff.
3. Leaders should ensure that there is adequate interaction and dialogue in conflict resolution.
4. Leaders should reduce the competition and supremacy among staff of their various institutions.
5. Leaders should advance appropriate information dissemination style.
6. Institutions' leaders should create adequate room for decision-making.
7. Participatory, rather than autocratic style of leadership should be encouraged by the tertiary institutions' administration.
8. The appointment of principal officers must strictly follow laid down procedures which should not be politicized in any way.
9. Conflict management skill should be a prerequisite parameter for appointing chief executives and/or managers of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
10. Methods of handling conflict such as panel and committee decisions, application of policies and guidelines should be used without favouritism or bias by leaders.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS OF A PROFESSIONAL TEACHER

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Introduction

Leadership is a necessary factor in every sphere of life. Effective growth, development and progress of humanity is hanged on dynamic, progressive and purposeful leadership. Leadership is a process of guiding, inspiring, motivating and influencing an individual or group to achieve a common goal. Dynamic leadership involves setting of goals, making decisions, providing directions, building relationships and taking responsibility. The hallmark of a teacher is to guide, motivate and influence the leaner towards the achievement of the learning objectives. Hence to achieve the objective of teaching the teacher must possess good leadership qualities. It takes a good level of professionalism to provide good leadership as a teacher. A professional teacher is a qualified facilitator of learning with expertise in subject matter and pedagogy from a recognized teacher training institution who also demonstrates ethical conduct and a commitment to student success continuous professional development and reflective practices. A professional teacher according to (NEA 2025) is one who has moved to full professional licensure from the regulatory body and have demonstrated their ability to employ different teaching skills. Professional teachers are tools for successful implementation of educational goals (IGI,2025). A professional teacher possesses a dynamic teaching and leadership style in the classroom. A dynamic teacher knows how to manage the classroom while keeping the learners engaged, this is achieved by setting clear rules, using positive reinforcement, building good relationship, interactive lesson, collaborative work and real-world connection to sustain learner's interest.

Dynamic Leadership Skills of a Professional Teacher

Dynamic leadership skills are essential for teachers who desire to make positive impact on students, colleagues, school community and the society at large. Dynamic leadership skills that make a professional teacher outstanding are:

- ***Patience:*** This is an important leadership skill that involves calmness under pressure, ability to make thoughtful decisions and supporting long term growth instead of concentrating only on immediate result. Patience helps a teacher to

foster a more trusting learning environment, boost learners confidence in the classroom. A patient teacher understands that learning is progressive in the classroom where there are students with different learning styles, therefore the teacher uses patience as a tool to navigate complex learning situations and individual differences in the classroom. Emphasizing patience as a professional leadership skill for teachers contribute to productive teaching and learning, promotes sustainable growth and success, enhance decision making, improve teamwork, increase resilience and trust, (Aurora 2025). Adopting patience as a dynamic leadership skill for professional teachers can present different challenges such as managing learners with special needs, work load, balancing patience with assertiveness and maintaining consistency. However, to effectively integrate and sustain the skill of patience as a dynamic leadership skill teachers must set realistic goals that are time bound, develop emotional intelligence, practice active listening, and foster the culture of resilience by encouraging learners through positive reinforcement.

- ***Effective communication:*** Communication is a vital tool for learning, it the act of sending information from the sender (teacher) receiving or decoding the information by the receiver (learner) and responding to the information. Effective communication is a dynamic leadership skill for teachers because it helps to build trust, create positive learning environment through active listening and participation, motivates the students through clarity of language of instruction and instructional aids. Effective communication as a dynamic leadership skill help in classroom management, because the students clearly understand teacher's language of instruction, instructional aids and body language. The teacher's ability to clearly explain, actively listen and thoughtfully responds to the learners is a core leadership attribute that promotes learning because it helps the students to be engaged, motivated, create a positive classroom culture and help in building stronger relationship with fellow students and parents. The core communication skill for dynamic leadership by teachers are, active listening, clear language, non-verbal cues, digital communication and cultural sensitivity. (Atheneum 2025). Good communication is a skill that can be learned, polished and improved on through teamwork and collaboration and digital communication and modules that builds interpersonal skills of teachers such as classroom management and conflict resolution, (Atheneum 2025). Teachers can also build effective communication skills by making their sentences simple and less ambiguous, paying more attention to listening, making use of visuals and stories, regular feedback and use of different adaptive styles.
- ***Creativity:*** This is a dynamic leadership skill that involves developing innovative teaching strategies to engage learners and solve problems. Creativity entails that teachers should be open minded, adaptable and skilled at fostering a supportive classroom where learners can experiment and learn. Creativity skill is essential for teaches because it helps in professional growth of teachers by make them to stay

relevant in an ever-changing world of learning. Creativity as an important dynamic leadership skill for professional teachers plays the following roles: enhances teacher professional growth, promotes learners, engagement and motivation to learn, encourages problem solving approach to teaching and learning, development of 21st century skills and encourages positive learning environment. Creativity leadership skill can be developed by teachers through the following ways: Adoption of new leadership styles, example servant leadership style with gives priority to the needs and growth of the learner and the team. Embracing continuous learning, collaboration, adoption of experimental methods and leveraging of technology.

- ***Organizational skill:*** This is a major aspect of teacher's dynamic leadership that enables the teacher in classroom management, foster synergy of the learning resources with the learning environment to achieve set objectives. Organizational skills enable the teacher to effectively manage the learners, time, staff, available resources and other personal and societal needs that will demand his attention without compromising any. Organizational skill includes skill like strategic planning of lessons delivery, creating clear work routines to manage school activities, professional development and other personal responsibilities. A teacher with a good organizational skill will be able to optimize learning time, set clear expectation, manage resources properly, lead by example, collaborate and communicate with students, colleagues and the society and implement initiatives.
- ***Confidence:*** Confidence is a dynamic leadership skill that enables teachers to inspire trust, adapt to changes and effectively manage classroom. A self-confident teacher is one who has mastery of the subject matter, pedagogy and the right application to achieve the objectives of each lesson. Confidence as a dynamic leadership skill for professional teachers enables effective classroom management and lesson delivery, inspires trust and authority when introducing new topic, promotes resilience and encourages a dynamic learning environment. Confidence is a dynamic teaching skill that can be developed through thorough preparation and mastering of subject matter, use of confidence body language, developing and maintaining a clear discipline strategy celebrating learners progress through positive reinforcement, constructively viewing of feedback, focusing on strength and successes and practicing self-reflection. Self-confidence according to (Ronil, 2021) is associated to teacher's level of performance and readiness for leadership roles.
- ***Empathy and compassion:*** Empathy and compassion is the ability to recognize, understand and share the emotions and feelings of other. It requires the consideration of other people's views and taking considering them as your own as well as responding with care and a compassionate tone. (Magie 2025). Empathy and compassion enable teachers to build trust, improve communication and create a supportive school environment and classroom that will encourage teachers and learners growth and wall-being. Empathy and compassion can be applied by teachers through the following ways: active listening, showing genuine interest in

learners progress, offering support, acknowledging and respect for learner's feelings, and emotional support.

- ***Collaboration and teamwork:*** Collaboration and team work is the act of involving the learners, parents, teachers, school environment, information technology and the society in teaching and learning with the aim of improving the learning outcomes and making it real. Collaboration and team of is a very important leadership skill that every teacher must adopt in this era of technology for effective teaching and learning. Collaboration and team work improves learning outcome, encourages professional growth, and creates innovative and positive school culture. Through collaboration and team work teachers can support one another by sharing ideas on best practices, develop creative solutions to solve learner's problems and ensure that students receive more practical and personalizes approach to teaching and learning. To effectively implement this skill as a leadership dynamic teacher's teachers should encourage adequate communication by creating an environment where teachers can comfortably ask questions, share ideas and get honest feedback. Encourage continuous improvement through regular meetings to and discussion to reflect on their practices and seek for improvement.

Dynamic Leadership Qualities of a Professional Teacher

- ***Visionary thinking:*** This is a dynamic forward- thinking style that enables a leader to create a long-term plan that inspires and motivates teams to achieve future goals Visionary thinking is characterized by inspiring innovation, collaboration, student's advocacy, continuous change and embracing improvement and strategic and analytical thinking. Visionary thinking style can be developed through creativity, strategic planning, effective communication, emotional intelligence and leading by example.
- ***Lifelong learning:*** This is a very important leadership quality for teachers that enables them to stay updated on educational development, strategies and trends for enhanced and adaptation to standards. It encompasses continuous professional training, certification, licensing commitment to acquiring new and innovative skills and knowledge which empowers them to innovate their classroom and guide learners effectively. Life long learning builds teacher's leadership quality by making them stay current on latest educational trends, methodologies and technological innovations. Promotes adaptability in an ever-changing educational lands scape, encourage student's development, boost professional reflection and improves classroom management.
- ***Problem solving and decision making:*** This is a leadership quality that focuses on making decisions that will result in positive outcome. Any leader that excels in this leadership quality can anticipate potential issues address them in a positive manner and adapt to circumstantial changes. Problem solving and decision making enables teachers to go true complex classroom challenges, encourage professional development and foster positive learning environment.

- ***Emotional intelligence:*** This is the ability of a teacher to understand himself, manage his emotions as well as recognize and positively influence the learner's emotion. This leadership quality involves self-awareness, self-esteem, self-motivation and relationship management. A teacher that has this quality can communicate effectively with the learners, resolve learner's conflict and manage stress easily.
- ***Flexibility and adaptability:*** This is a leadership quality that enables teachers to diversify learning, modify lesson and restructure learning environment and adjust content to meet different learners needs. Teachers who possess these leadership qualities can easily adjust to classroom dynamics, respond to learners need, solve learner's problems, effectively use different methods of teaching, promote student's resilience and stay current.
- ***Coaching and mentoring:*** A mentor is a person who provides long term guidance others based on his experiences, exposures and achievements, while a coach is one who guides others to achieve specific short- term goals.These qualities are very significant for effective teaching and learning. Teachers who possess these qualities makes teaching and learning very interesting and encourages learners to strive to learn more.

How to Develop Dynamic Leadership Skills as a Professional Teacher

Developing dynamic leadership skill is what makes a teacher's current and relevant in their career. Relaying only on their certificates or previous knowledge will fail them because we are in a world that keeps changing and knew things evolves every day. Professional teachers therefore can develop dynamic leadership skills through the following ways:

- ***Professional development:*** Continuous professional development keeps teachers abreast with the current teaching pedagogical approach which helps them align with global best practices in teaching and educational administration, educational planning and guidance and counseling. Teacher's professional development should periodic and should not be allowed to take long after each training. This can be achieved through, workshops, seminars, conferences and addition diploma or degrees from recognized institutions of higher learning.
- ***Mentorship:*** Mentoring plays a significant role in developing teacher's leadership prowess by providing a structured and supportive environment for professional development of new and younger teachers through, one-on-one interaction with experienced educators and senior colleagues. Mentoring boosts confidence and resilience, facilitates the transfer of knowledge from the mentor to the mentee through constructive feedback. Through mentoring there is collaboration which promotes continuous learning and expands professional network.
- ***Leadership opportunities:*** One on the major ways to develop dynamic leadership skills is by accepting leadership opportunities. Accepting leadership roles helps teachers to gain practical experiences and develop effective communication skills as

a leader. However, acceptance of leadership positions by teachers in schools or in the society should be a gradual process that may follow a progressive growth sequence for example, from a form teacher to subject or unit head, then to head of department from head of department to Dean of studies, next is vice principal and principal.

- ***Networking:*** Networking is the fastest way of professional development in the world today. Therefore, to develop professional leadership skills teachers most collaborate with their fellow teachers and people from other works of life through effective networking. In today's world networking is very easy through the use in information communication technology ICT and different artificial intelligence AI tool to learn, unlearn and relearn.
- ***Reflection and self-assessment:*** Reflection and self-assessment is a major way on can do self-examination, it helps you to increase self-awareness, adaptability and give your ability to make informed decision on your growth and development. Through this process teachers are able to identify the strength and weaknesses which will help them to strategies on how to improve on their leadership skill in the class a and outside the classroom

Conclusion

Professional teachers are dynamic leaders in in the classrooms, school environment and the society at large. The importance of teacher's leadership dynamics can be summarized as follows:

- Improvement of learning outcome
- Empowerment of teachers
- It leads to improvement in every aspect of the school system
- It encourages collaboration and teamwork
- It leads to a better society.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE IN AFRICA'S DIGITAL AND CYBER SECURITY ERA

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Introduction

It has long been acknowledged that leadership has a critical role in determining institutional stability, employee satisfaction, and organizational performance (Akanbi & Okoli, 2023). Leadership dynamics are especially important in Africa, as businesses operate in socioeconomic conditions that are frequently characterized by instability, inadequate infrastructure, and challenges from the digital revolution. In addition to inspiring and motivating employees, good leadership protects businesses from both internal and external risks, such as cybercrime, and promotes peace between various employee groups (Kassa, 2021).

Globalization, digitization, and the use of information technologies in the public and private sectors have all had a significant impact on African companies over the last ten years (Munyua & Wambui, 2022). These modifications have increased access to new markets and operating efficiency, but they have also created new vulnerabilities. Institutions from banks and telecom companies to academic institutions and governmental organizations have been more and more impacted by cybersecurity breaches, data theft, and financial fraud (Olaoye et al., 2023). As a result, the ability of leaders to predict, manage, and reduce digital hazards is now taken into account in addition to their capacity to promote job happiness and industrial harmony.

Subordinates' attitudes and performance are influenced by a variety of leadership behaviors, decision-making styles, and interpersonal skills (Nwosu, 2022). Higher levels of employee happiness and commitment have been linked to transformational and participative leadership styles, which in turn promote workplace harmony (Mensah & Adusei, 2020). But the emergence of cyberthreats adds a new level of leadership that calls for digital literacy, ethical awareness, and social intelligence (Mutiso & Oketch, 2023). Today's leaders must retain the unity and morale of their workforce while fostering a culture of cybersecurity attention.

Industrial harmony refers to a state of cooperation, mutual respect, and absence of conflict between management and employees (Ademola, 2021). In many African settings, industrial disharmony has historically been associated with poor communication, low motivation, and a lack of trust in management (Okeke & Mkhize, 2022). These same relational weaknesses can manifest in digital vulnerabilities when organizational culture fails to prioritize collective accountability in safeguarding data and systems. Thus, leadership aimed at ensuring industrial peace must now also promote a shared sense of responsibility for digital security and ethical conduct online.

The intersection between human resource management and cybersecurity leadership forms the crux of this chapter. The discussion argues that leadership in Africa must evolve beyond traditional administrative functions to embrace an integrative model, one that aligns job satisfaction, industrial relations, and cybersecurity governance. By drawing on theoretical frameworks such as transformational leadership, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, and adaptive leadership models, this chapter demonstrates how leadership can become the strategic link between workforce well-being and organizational digital resilience.

The significance of this discussion lies in its relevance to African development contexts, where the digital divide and socio-economic inequalities intersect with emerging cyber threats (Eboh, 2023). The capacity of leaders to maintain satisfied, secure, and harmonious work environments will largely determine whether African organizations can sustain growth and competitiveness in the digital economy. Consequently, this chapter contributes to the growing discourse on leadership's evolving responsibilities in Africa, responsibilities that now extend from managing people to managing technological risk and trust.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Leadership dynamics cannot be fully understood without situating them within appropriate theoretical and conceptual perspectives. In the African context, where organizations navigate a complex interplay of socio-economic transformation, technological adaptation, and workforce diversity, leadership models must address both human relations and technological governance. This section outlines key theories that frame the discussion: transformational leadership, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, theories of industrial relations, and emerging cybersecurity leadership models.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership, popularized by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass and Riggio (2006), emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate followers toward collective goals. This model promotes emotional connection, trust, and empowerment, making it highly relevant for fostering job satisfaction and industrial harmony. In African organizations,

transformational leaders are often pivotal in bridging hierarchical gaps, promoting participatory decision-making, and aligning individual aspirations with organizational objectives (Mensah & Adusei, 2020).

Research has shown that transformational leadership enhances employees' intrinsic motivation, commitment, and trust in management critical factors in reducing workplace conflict and turnover (Akanbi & Okoli, 2023). Furthermore, transformational leaders who model ethical behavior and openness can create a culture that values transparency and accountability, both of which are essential for cybersecurity compliance and digital ethics (Mutiso & Oketch, 2023). Hence, the transformational model supports not only human-centered leadership but also digital resilience through ethical and trust-based governance.

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Frederick Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1959) offers another dimension to understanding leadership and job satisfaction. Herzberg differentiated between motivators (intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility) and hygiene factors (extrinsic elements such as salary, supervision, and working conditions). According to this theory, true satisfaction arises from intrinsic motivators, while dissatisfaction results from poor hygiene factors.

In African organizational settings, leaders play a crucial role in managing both motivators and hygiene factors to sustain employee morale and prevent industrial unrest (Ademola, 2021). For example, ensuring fair communication channels, recognition systems, and safe digital working environments can significantly influence job satisfaction levels. As cyber threats increase, leaders must also recognize cybersecurity safety as an emerging hygiene factor, an environmental necessity that employees expect as part of a secure workplace (Olaoye et al., 2023). A digitally insecure organization can lead to psychological stress and mistrust, undermining the positive work climate leaders strive to build.

Theories of Industrial Relations and Organizational Harmony

The industrial relations perspective emphasizes the importance of collective bargaining, communication, and mutual respect between employers and employees (Fajana, 2020). Within this framework, leadership acts as a mediator that balances the interests of management and labor, ensuring stability and productivity. In Africa, industrial harmony often depends on how leaders handle power dynamics, cultural diversity, and organizational justice (Okeke & Mkhize, 2022). Participative and servant leadership approaches have been particularly effective in promoting fairness and inclusivity in unionized and non-unionized environments alike (Eboh, 2023). Effective communication from leaders helps minimize grievances, prevent strikes, and maintain trust, conditions that are increasingly relevant as organizations adopt digital systems that can both improve and complicate industrial relations. Industrial relations theory, when linked with

cybersecurity, suggests that digital harmony, the smooth interaction between humans and digital systems, may soon become an extension of industrial harmony. Leaders must, therefore, understand that workplace peace now includes both physical and cyber domains, where data integrity, digital ethics, and cyber awareness are integral to overall harmony.

Cybersecurity Leadership and Organizational Resilience

As organizations across Africa embrace digital transformation, the concept of cybersecurity leadership has gained traction. This emerging model combines elements of strategic, ethical, and adaptive leadership to address the growing complexity of digital threats (Munyua & Wambui, 2022). Cybersecurity leadership involves guiding teams to adopt secure practices, fostering awareness, and integrating information security into organizational culture (Mutiso & Oketch, 2023).

Resilient leadership emphasizes foresight, adaptability, and systems thinking traits that are essential for mitigating risks and recovering quickly from cyber incidents (Olaoye et al., 2023). In Africa, where digital literacy and resource limitations may constrain cybersecurity efforts, leadership becomes the decisive factor in determining organizational resilience. Effective leaders not only enforce technological safeguards but also inspire behavioral change, cultivating a shared sense of responsibility toward digital safety.

This concept aligns with the adaptive leadership model (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997), which views leadership as the ability to mobilize people to tackle complex, evolving challenges. Adaptive leaders promote learning and flexibility, key components in confronting the unpredictable nature of cybercrime. By integrating human resource management and cybersecurity governance, adaptive leadership strengthens both employee satisfaction and digital defense.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the preceding theories, this chapter proposes a conceptual model linking leadership dynamics, job satisfaction, industrial harmony, and cybersecurity resilience. 1) Leadership Dynamics: The independent construct encompasses transformational, participative, and adaptive behaviors that influence both human and digital systems. 2) Job Satisfaction: The emotional and cognitive state resulting from motivation, fairness, and recognition within the workplace. 3) Industrial Harmony: The collective state of organizational peace achieved through trust, communication, and equitable relations. 4) Cybersecurity Management: The strategic and cultural processes that ensure digital safety, data integrity, and ethical online conduct. 5) Organizational Resilience: The dependent construct reflecting an organization's capacity to withstand social and technological disruptions. In essence, effective leadership acts as a mediating force connecting

psychological satisfaction, harmonious labor relations, and digital security preparedness. When leadership dynamics are strong, they simultaneously enhance employee well-being and foster a cyber-aware, resilient organizational culture.

Leadership Dynamics and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction remains a critical determinant of employee performance, productivity, and retention across organizations. Leadership dynamics, encompassing communication style, motivation strategy, decision-making approach, and ethical conduct, exert a profound influence on how satisfied employees feel with their work and workplace environment (Akanbi & Okoli, 2023). In Africa, where socio-economic instability and institutional transformation are prevalent, leadership assumes a particularly central role in sustaining morale and commitment among employees.

Leadership and Employee Motivation

Leadership serves as a primary source of motivation within the workplace. Transformational leaders, for instance, encourage employees to transcend personal interests for organizational goals by providing purpose, recognition, and intellectual stimulation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). According to Mensah and Adusei (2020), motivation in African organizations is not solely linked to financial compensation but also to leaders' interpersonal sensitivity, transparency, and fairness. In this sense, leadership is both a motivational catalyst and a relational force. Leaders who communicate clearly and demonstrate empathy foster psychological security, a key component of job satisfaction (Nwosu, 2022). Moreover, leaders who engage in open dialogue, delegate authority, and show trust in their subordinates cultivate a sense of belonging and empowerment.

This leadership style aligns with Herzberg's (1959) emphasis on intrinsic motivators such as recognition and achievement. Conversely, authoritarian or inconsistent leadership often produces dissatisfaction, stress, and disengagement (Ademola, 2021). Employees under such leadership may experience fear and uncertainty, leading to absenteeism, poor performance, and, in extreme cases, industrial unrest. Thus, leadership behaviors directly shape the affective and cognitive dimensions of employee satisfaction.

Leadership Communication and Workplace Trust

Effective communication is central to job satisfaction and workplace cohesion. Leaders who articulate clear goals, provide feedback, and maintain transparency build trust, which serves as a foundation for organizational harmony (Eboh, 2023). In African organizations, hierarchical communication structures can sometimes inhibit open dialogue, leading to misunderstanding and conflict. Transformational and participative leaders mitigate these challenges by flattening communication barriers and encouraging participatory dialogue (Okeke & Mkhize, 2022).

Leadership Ethics and Psychological Safety

Leadership ethics underpin both employee well-being and organizational credibility. Ethical leaders model honesty, fairness, and responsibility qualities that inspire employees' trust and long-term commitment (Mutiso & Oketch, 2023). In African contexts, ethical leadership has been found to mitigate corruption, favoritism, and workplace exploitation, which are among the major causes of job dissatisfaction and organizational decline (Kassa, 2021). In digitalized workplaces, ethical leadership further extends to responsible data governance and privacy protection. Leaders must ensure that technological tools do not infringe on employee rights or well-being. When workers perceive that leadership prioritizes ethical data use and fairness, their trust in management strengthens, thereby enhancing their satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Leadership Adaptability in a Changing Work Environment

In volatile economic conditions, adaptive leaders support employees by aligning organizational goals with individual aspirations, thus maintaining morale and stability. They also demonstrate resilience in managing uncertainty, modeling behavior that reassures employees and encourages them to remain committed. According to Fajana (2020), such leadership responsiveness reduces job-related anxiety and turnover, strengthening industrial relations and workplace harmony.

The African Context: Cultural and Structural Influences

Leadership and job satisfaction in Africa are deeply shaped by cultural, social, and institutional factors. Collectivist values, respect for hierarchy, and community-oriented decision-making characterize many African work environments (Ademola, 2021). While these norms can promote cooperation, they may also inhibit feedback if leaders are perceived as unapproachable. Successful African leaders, therefore, blend traditional respect-based authority with modern participative leadership, ensuring that employees feel both respected and heard (Okeke & Mkhize, 2022).

Leadership, Industrial Harmony, and Organizational Climate

Industrial harmony refers to a state of cooperation, mutual respect, and peaceful relations between employers and employees, which fosters organizational productivity and stability. Leadership dynamics are central to achieving and sustaining this balance. In the African context, where labor relations often occur within socio-political and economic complexities, leadership behavior can determine whether industrial relations remain cooperative or confrontational (Fajana, 2020). Effective leadership cultivates mutual trust, ensures fairness, and creates an environment where both management and workers pursue shared goals rather than adversarial interests.

Understanding Industrial Harmony

Industrial harmony goes beyond the absence of conflict; it encompasses proactive communication, equitable treatment, and alignment between

organizational and employee objectives (Ademola, 2021). Harmonious organizations demonstrate high levels of morale, low absenteeism, and greater innovation due to a sense of unity and belonging among workers. In contrast, environments marked by mistrust, poor communication, or perceived injustice are prone to strikes, low productivity, and employee disengagement (Okeke & Mkhize, 2022).

Leadership plays a dual role in shaping industrial harmony: as a negotiator and as a culture-builder. Leaders negotiate between competing interests, ensuring that grievances are addressed constructively, and they also build a positive organizational climate that minimizes conflict. The quality of leadership communication, transparency in decision-making, and responsiveness to employee needs all contribute to maintaining a stable industrial environment (Eboh, 2023).

Participative and Servant Leadership Approaches

Participative leadership encourages shared decision-making and consultation, empowering employees to contribute to policies that affect them. In African organizations, this approach aligns with communal cultural values that emphasize collaboration and inclusion (Mensah & Adusei, 2020). When employees perceive that their voices matter, they develop stronger psychological ownership of organizational outcomes, reducing the likelihood of disputes and dissatisfaction.

Servant leadership, on the other hand, emphasizes empathy, humility, and the leader's responsibility to serve others (Greenleaf, 1977). This approach resonates deeply within African socio-cultural systems, where leadership is often viewed as stewardship rather than domination. Servant leaders prioritize employee well-being, fairness, and growth, all of which strengthen industrial harmony (Kassa, 2021). In practice, servant leadership manifests through transparent communication, conflict mediation, and the equitable resolution of disputes. Both participative and servant leadership styles counteract authoritarian tendencies that have historically contributed to industrial disharmony in some African workplaces. Leaders who listen, consult, and act ethically foster trust and prevent escalation of minor issues into major conflicts (Nwosu, 2022).

Leadership, Labor Relations, and Digital Transformation

As African organizations increasingly adopt digital technologies, the traditional understanding of industrial harmony is expanding. Labor relations now intersect with issues such as remote work, data surveillance, and cybersecurity policies, areas that can generate new tensions if not managed sensitively. Leadership must balance technological efficiency with employee rights and privacy (Olaoye et al., 2023). For example, digital monitoring tools designed to enhance productivity can inadvertently breed mistrust if implemented without proper communication or consent. Leaders must therefore demonstrate ethical judgment and transparency in deploying such systems. By engaging employees in dialogue about digital changes and ensuring fairness in technology-driven decision-making, leaders preserve trust and prevent conflict.

Furthermore, as cyber threats rise, employees are often required to comply with new cybersecurity protocols, which can initially be perceived as burdensome. Leaders who educate and motivate staff about the importance of digital safety transform potential resistance into cooperation (Munyua & Wambui, 2022). Hence, digital transformation requires not only technological readiness but also relational leadership competence, the ability to lead people empathetically through technological change.

The African Leadership Context

Industrial harmony in Africa is influenced by socio-cultural norms that shape how authority and cooperation are perceived. Respect for elders, collective decision-making, and communal responsibility remain integral to leadership legitimacy in many African societies (Ademola, 2021). These values can be leveraged by visionary leaders to promote unity and shared purpose. However, traditional power hierarchies sometimes conflict with modern organizational expectations of inclusivity and transparency. The challenge for African leaders, therefore, is to balance traditional respect-based authority with modern democratic engagement. When effectively managed, this hybrid leadership culture enhances both harmony and innovation. Kassa (2021) notes that African leaders who embrace humility, fairness, and service-oriented leadership not only reduce labor conflicts but also increase employee trust in digital governance initiatives. Thus, industrial harmony in the digital age depends on leaders' ability to merge cultural wisdom with technological foresight.

Leadership, Security, and Cybercrime Trends

In the 21st century, leadership effectiveness is increasingly evaluated by an organization's ability to prevent, detect, and respond to security threats, particularly in cyberspace. As African economies accelerate their digital transformation, the growing incidence of cyberattacks, data theft, and online fraud poses significant challenges to both public and private institutions (Olaoye et al., 2023). The rapid expansion of e-governance systems, mobile banking, and cloud computing has created new opportunities for growth while simultaneously exposing organizations to vulnerabilities. Leadership must therefore evolve to integrate cybersecurity management into its strategic vision, aligning human, technological, and ethical dimensions to ensure organizational resilience.

The Growing Threat of Cybercrime in Africa

Cybercrime in Africa has expanded dramatically over the past decade. The African Union Commission (2022) reports that cyberattacks on financial institutions, telecommunications, and government agencies have increased by over 200% since 2018. Common forms of cybercrime include phishing, ransomware, identity theft, and distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks (Eboh, 2023). The economic impact is profound, with losses exceeding $4 billion annually across the

continent (Interpol, 2022). While technology drives these attacks, the root causes often stem from leadership and governance weaknesses: inadequate cybersecurity policies, limited awareness among staff, and insufficient coordination between departments. Leaders who lack digital literacy or prioritize short-term profits over long-term risk management inadvertently expose their organizations to significant security breaches (Mutiso & Oketch, 2023).

Leadership Competence in Cybersecurity Governance

Cybersecurity is no longer a purely technical issue; it is a strategic leadership challenge. Effective cybersecurity leadership requires a combination of technological awareness, ethical responsibility, and strategic foresight (Mensah & Adusei, 2020). Leaders must be able to interpret security risks, allocate resources efficiently, and build a culture of vigilance among employees. Akanbi and Okoli (2023) argue that cybersecurity governance should be treated as an extension of corporate governance, where leaders are accountable for ensuring data integrity, confidentiality, and availability. This view positions leadership as both protector and educator: leaders must not only implement secure systems but also model the values of transparency, trust, and accountability in digital behavior. In African contexts, limited access to cybersecurity expertise makes leadership competence even more critical. Leaders must facilitate continuous training, establish partnerships with government and private agencies, and create responsive policies that evolve with technological trends (Kassa, 2021).

Ethical Leadership and Data Protection

Ethical leadership is indispensable in addressing security and cybercrime challenges. Ethical leaders are characterized by honesty, fairness, and moral integrity, which influence employees to act responsibly and ethically (Munyua & Wambui, 2022). In cybersecurity, ethical leadership ensures that privacy rights are protected, surveillance systems are used transparently, and data are handled in accordance with legal and moral standards. In African organizations, where data protection laws are still evolving, leaders play a crucial role in setting ethical precedents. For example, the implementation of Nigeria's Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) and Kenya's Data Protection Act (2019) relies heavily on the ethical commitment of organizational leaders to enforce compliance and safeguard user data. Ethical lapses such as unauthorized data sharing or corruption in digital procurement undermine both security and public trust (Eboh, 2023). Therefore, ethical leadership is not only about avoiding misconduct but about cultivating a moral culture where every employee values digital integrity as part of organizational identity.

Collaborative and Adaptive Leadership in Cybersecurity

Cyber threats evolve rapidly, often crossing organizational and national boundaries. Hence, leadership responses must be collaborative and adaptive. Collaborative leadership emphasizes partnerships within organizations, across

industries, and with government agencies to share intelligence and coordinate defensive measures (Olaoye et al., 2023). Adaptive leadership, by contrast, focuses on flexibility and learning in uncertain environments (Heifetz, 1994). African organizations face unique challenges such as resource limitations, skill gaps, and uneven regulatory enforcement. Adaptive leaders respond by fostering learning cultures where employees continuously acquire cybersecurity knowledge and remain alert to emerging threats (Kassa, 2021). They also champion innovation by supporting research and integrating indigenous problem-solving approaches to digital risk management.

Cybersecurity Awareness and Organizational Culture

Leadership-driven awareness programs play a pivotal role in combating cybercrime. Many cybersecurity breaches occur not due to technical flaws but because of human error: employees clicking on malicious links, using weak passwords, or ignoring policy guidelines (Mensah & Adusei, 2020). Leaders who promote a culture of digital vigilance through regular training and communication significantly reduce these risks. According to Mutiso and Oketch (2023), cybersecurity awareness should be embedded into organizational culture, not treated as an isolated activity. Leaders can achieve this by integrating security objectives into performance evaluations, celebrating compliance achievements, and framing cybersecurity as a collective responsibility. In African educational institutions, for example, effective leadership in cybersecurity education has been shown to improve students' and staff's resilience to phishing and social engineering attacks (Olaoye et al., 2023). This highlights the transformative role of leadership in aligning human behavior with technological protection.

Integrating Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Industrial Harmony, and Cybersecurity

The complexities of 21st-century organizations demand an integrative leadership framework capable of addressing both human and digital challenges. The interdependence between leadership dynamics, job satisfaction, industrial harmony, and cybersecurity underscores the evolving responsibilities of modern leaders, particularly within African contexts. Effective leadership now requires balancing employee well-being and morale with the strategic imperative of protecting organizational assets from cyber threats (Kassa, 2021). This section presents a synthesized perspective on how these dimensions can be harmoniously integrated to foster resilient, innovative, and secure organizations.

The Interplay Between Job Satisfaction and Security Awareness

Job satisfaction and cybersecurity awareness share a reciprocal relationship. Employees who feel valued, supported, and fairly treated are more likely to comply with cybersecurity policies and act responsibly online (Mutiso & Oketch, 2023). Conversely, when morale is low or leadership is perceived as untrustworthy, employees may disregard protocols or even engage in negligent or malicious cyber

behavior. Leaders can strengthen this link by embedding cybersecurity education within organizational learning and welfare initiatives. For instance, workshops on cyber hygiene can be coupled with broader discussions about employee empowerment and digital ethics (Olaoye et al., 2023). Such integrative approaches ensure that workers view cybersecurity not as a top-down directive but as part of their collective responsibility toward organizational success. Furthermore, recognition and reward systems that celebrate both job performance and adherence to security best practices reinforce a sense of shared achievement and security consciousness (Kassa, 2021).

Leadership and Industrial Harmony in the Digital Workplace

Industrial harmony in the digital age requires leadership that can manage both interpersonal and technological relationships. The expansion of remote work, digital surveillance, and automated systems has introduced new ethical and relational challenges. Leaders must ensure that technology enhances, rather than erodes, trust and fairness in the workplace (Munyua & Wambui, 2022). A climate of open communication is crucial. When leaders engage employees in discussions about digital monitoring, data protection, and system upgrades, it reduces suspicion and conflict (Ademola, 2021). Moreover, effective leaders integrate digital transformation goals into collective bargaining frameworks, ensuring that technology adoption aligns with labor rights and well-being. In Africa, where digital literacy varies widely, leaders have an additional responsibility to bridge knowledge gaps through continuous learning and mentorship (Fajana, 2020). By creating inclusive spaces for digital participation, leaders promote harmony and ensure that technological transitions benefit rather than marginalize employees.

Building a Culture of Resilience Through Leadership

Organizational resilience refers to the capacity to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to disruptions, whether they arise from labor disputes, economic instability, or cyberattacks (Nwosu, 2022). Leadership is the catalyst for developing such resilience. Resilient leaders nurture cultures that value adaptability, learning, and ethical decision-making. In practical terms, this involves establishing policies that reward initiative, support cross-departmental collaboration, and promote continuous training. Leaders who treat cybersecurity as part of broader organizational resilience efforts alongside employee welfare and safety are better positioned to maintain stability during crises (Kassa, 2021). For example, during cybersecurity incidents, empathetic leadership that communicates openly, prioritizes employee confidence, and models calmness helps sustain morale and prevent organizational panic (Mutiso & Oketch, 2023). This approach ensures that employees remain engaged and cooperative even under stressful conditions, preserving both industrial harmony and operational continuity.

Ethical Leadership and Trust as Unifying Forces

Trust is the foundation that unites job satisfaction, industrial harmony, and cybersecurity. Ethical leadership fosters trust through integrity, transparency, and fairness. When employees trust their leaders, they are more committed to organizational goals and more likely to report anomalies or potential security threats promptly (Mensah & Adusei, 2020). In African contexts, where institutional mistrust sometimes undermines cooperation, ethical leadership serves as a stabilizing force (Ademola, 2021). Leaders who uphold confidentiality, respect diversity, and ensure equitable treatment not only enhance job satisfaction but also inspire a collective sense of digital and organizational responsibility.

Conclusion

Leadership remains the cornerstone of organizational success, stability, and adaptability in the digital era. In Africa, where economic transformation and technological adoption are reshaping institutions, leaders face the dual challenge of maintaining employee satisfaction and harmony while safeguarding their organizations against the growing menace of cybercrime. This chapter has demonstrated that leadership dynamics profoundly influence three critical organizational dimensions: job satisfaction, industrial harmony, and security management. Transformational and participative leadership styles enhance motivation and teamwork, while ethical and adaptive leadership models ensure resilience and moral accountability in managing both people and technology. The chapter's analysis underscores that leadership is not a static attribute but an evolving capability, a dynamic interaction between human relations and technological governance. The leaders of the future in Africa must therefore become architects of resilience, cultivating workplaces that are motivated, secure, and ethically grounded.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions presented, the following recommendations were proposed:

1. ***Integrate Leadership and Cybersecurity Training:*** Leadership development programs in Africa should incorporate cybersecurity awareness, ethical digital governance, and data protection principles. This will enable leaders to manage technological threats as confidently as they manage human relations.
2. ***Promote Ethical Leadership Practices:*** Organizations should institutionalize ethical codes of conduct that guide leaders and employees in digital interactions. Ethical leadership promotes transparency, builds trust, and reduces internal security vulnerabilities.
3. ***Enhance Employee Digital Literacy:*** Regular cybersecurity education should be embedded in staff development programs. A digitally literate workforce is a crucial defense mechanism against cyber threats.
4. ***Foster Participative Leadership:*** Encouraging shared decision-making in both human resource and technology-related matters strengthens job satisfaction, trust, and harmony across organizational hierarchies.

5. **Develop Policy Frameworks for Cyber Resilience:** Governments and corporate bodies should collaborate to design and enforce policies that promote digital safety and accountability. This includes compliance with African data protection laws and adoption of best practices from global cybersecurity frameworks.

6. **Encourage Research and Knowledge Sharing:** African institutions should invest in interdisciplinary research linking leadership, organizational psychology, and cybersecurity. Knowledge exchange platforms will strengthen leadership capacity across sectors.

7. **Build Cross-Sector Leadership Coalitions:** Collaborative partnerships between government, academia, and industry leaders can enhance Africa's collective ability to address cybercrime and promote ethical technological innovation.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND FUNDING EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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Introduction

Leadership dynamics play a critical role in determining the trajectory and efficacy of educational research in the evolving landscape of higher education. As institutions of higher learning grapples with the challenges of innovations as a result of technological advancement, leadership plays a vital role in fostering research culture by promoting an environment conducive for inquiry and exploration. With limited resources and increased competition for grants, leadership must adopt strategic approaches to secure funding and allocate resources efficiently. This involves not only understanding the intricacies of grant writing and external funding opportunities but also cultivating partnership with governmental bodies, philanthropic organizations and private sector stakeholders. In this context, the interplay between leadership dynamics and funding strategies significantly shapes direction of educational research. Effective and dynamic leaders not only inspire and mobilize researchers, but also champion the necessity of research funding as a means to support academic inquiry and innovation.

Leadership dynamics

According to Patel and Shah (2020). "Leadership dynamics is the interplay of leadership styles, follower motivation, and organizational culture that collectively influence group performance and organizational outcomes". Also, Hayashi (2021) defined leadership dynamics as "The evolving patterns of influence between leaders and followers, characterized by reciprocity, adaptability, and the impact of contextual factors on leadership practices". Again, Ma and Simmons (2022) opined that "Leadership dynamics involves the cyclical process of interaction, communication, and feedback among leaders and their teams that shapes the effectiveness and resilience of organizations". Furthermore, Morrison and Edwards (2023) defined leadership dynamics that " it encapsulates the fluid and reciprocal nature of leader-follower relationships, emphasizing how contextual shifts and collective identities transform leadership approaches". In the same vein, Nelson (2024) sees leadership dynamics as " The continuous process of change in leadership behavior and followers responses, influenced by internal organizational structures and external environmental factors". Leadership dynamics can therefore

be seen as an effective collaboration between leaders and followers in an organization where new trends are collectively examined, considered and implemented for the purpose of achieving the goals of the organization. Again, leadership dynamics in education could be considered as the process of Educational leaders and Educational stakeholders, collaborating through effective communication to improve the growth and development of Education.

Leadership dynamics play a vital role in funding education generally and Educational Research in particular. This is because, educational research is the basis for new innovations. Any nation that is interested in developing her educational sector must be willing and deliberate to invest her resources on research, hence, the inevitability of funding educational research.

Funding Educational Research

The place of Educational Research in the development of education cannot be toyed with because it is a tool to unlocking innovations, new ideas, methodologies, inventions and procedures. According to Jones (2019), funding educational research refers to the financial support provided by government, private, and non-profit organizations to facilitate research initiatives that investigate various aspects of education, including pedagogy, technology integration, and educational equity". Also, Thomson (2020) opined that "funding educational research encompasses the diver financial contributions required to sustain rigorous investigations into the educational systems, including grants, fellowships, and institutional support, aimed at improving students learning experiences". Again, Kim and Lee (2022) asserts that " funding educational research is the process of securing monetary resources for the investigation of educational methodologies and their effectiveness, enabling researchers to conduct studies that yield evidence-based solutions for contemporary educational challenges". In the same vein, White (2023) defined funding educational research as "the process that involves the provision of financial resources necessary for conducting inquiries into teaching and learning, supporting the development of new knowledge that informs educational policy and practice. Miller (2024) refers to funding educational research as "the collective resources allocated from various stakeholders, including federal agencies and private foundations, to promote studies designed to enhance educational outcomes through innovative and data-driven approaches". Funding educational research can also be seen as a deliberate step taken to source for funds to finance educational research for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. In other words, Funding educational research could be considered as the allocation of financial resources to educational researchers with the aim of fostering new discoveries towards improving educational practices.

Ways to Funding Educational Research

As an inevitable venture, there are several ways by which educational research could be funded. Among other ways include the following:

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND). This is a public institution established by the Nigerian government to provide funding for the development of higher education through research, infrastructure development, and academic training. Institutions can apply for grants to support various research projects and educational activities.

National Research Fund (NRF). The Nigerian government has established the National Research Fund to promote research in Universities and research institutions. This find can be accessed academics conducting educational research that aligns with national development goals.

University and Research Institutions. Individual universities and research institutions in Nigeria often have their own internal funding mechanisms for supporting research projects. This may include provisions in their budgets or specific funds set aside for innovative educational research.

Research Networks and Collaborations. Researchers may also participate in collaborative projects which are funded by larger international grants or programs such as the African Union, UNESCO, or World Bank, focusing on educational development.

Government policies and Special Programs. The Nigerian government occasionally launched special programs aimed at boosting research in education. For example, specific projects targeting the improvement of science and technical education, improving literacy rates, or enhancing teacher training.

Challenges of Funding Educational Research in Nigeria

While there are several ways by which quality educational research can be funded, there are challenges that hinders effective research funding in Nigeria. Among other challenges are the following:

Bureaucratic Hurdles: Delay in the release of funds for research has been a serious setback. There is a complex and lengthy bureaucratic process before approved funds are released for research initiatives.

Lack of institutional support: Many universities and research institutions in Nigeria lack the necessary infrastructure and administrative support to facilitate research activities effectively. This includes limited access to research facilities, libraries, and technological resources.

Inconsistent policy Framework: Changes in government policies and priorities can lead to instability in research funding.

Limited Capacity for Proposal Development: Many researchers lack the training or expertise in grant proposal writing, thereby making it very difficult to compete for funding from international or private sources. This can result in missed opportunities for securing external funds.

Neglect of Applied Research: Funding bodies may prioritize Basic research over Applied research that addresses local educational challenges. This can lead to a gap between research outputs and practical applications in the educational sector.

Economic Instability: The Nigerian economic challenges, including inflation and currency devaluation can negatively impact educational budgets and grant provisions. Economic Instability can lead to reduced funding availability and increased cost for conducting research.

Inadequate funds: Budgets allocations from the government are always so limited. This constrains the scope and scale of research projects. In fact, the overall funding for educational research is often insufficient.

Leadership Dynamics and Funding Educational Research

Leadership dynamics plays a crucial role in funding educational research in Nigeria. This involves influencing everything, from policy making to resource allocation. It can be said that funding educational research is dependent largely on leadership dynamics. This can be seen from the highlights below:

Allocation of Resources: Leadership at various levels affects how resources are allocated for educational research. For instance, the National University Commission (NUC) under various leaderships has directed funds towards research grants aimed at universities thereby impacting the availability of financial support for educational projects.

Collaboration and Partnership: Effective and Efficient leaders foster partnerships between educational institutions and private sector entities, international organizations, and NGOs. For example, the partnership between Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and international bodies like UNICEF, has led to collaborative funding of various educational research initiatives aimed at improving educational practices.

Advocacy for Funding: Leaders in educational institutions often play a key role in advocating for increased funding for research. For instance, Vice-Chancellors engages government to have an upward review of TETFUND towards enhancing training and research in education.

Research Impact on Policy Decision: Leaders who value evidence -based decision making tend to allocate funds towards research that can inform educational policies. For instance, research on the efficacy of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programs can lead to increased funding to enhance curriculum development and teacher training.

Cultural and Ethical Leadership: The ethical climate created by leaders can affect the integrity of research funding. For example, transparent leadership in grant allocation can mitigate corruption and misallocation of funds, ensuring that educational research receives the necessary financial support to Impact educational reforms and development.

Capacity building and professional development: Leadership that is sensitive to current realities in education always prioritize staff capacity building and professional development because they are the implementers of the curriculum. This suggests why some Leaders ruin institutions because of being dogmatic to old systems of leadership that do not align with current realities.

Conclusion

Funding educational research is dependent on leadership dynamics. If Leadership is effective and efficient, there will be proper collaboration with educational researchers towards ensuring the exploration of new innovations that will bring about educational development. This educational development can be achieved through; allocation of resources promptly, collaboration and Partnership, advocacy for funding, data-driven decision making, as well as capacity building and professional development.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

Leadership dynamics and conflict management are intricately linked, with effective leadership playing a crucial role in shaping conflict outcomes within organizations. This concept is grounded in various theoretical perspectives that highlight the importance of leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and communication strategies in managing conflicts.

Different leadership styles can significantly impact how conflicts are managed within teams. According to Bass (1985), transformational leadership, characterized by inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, can foster a positive conflict management environment by encouraging open communication and collaboration. In contrast, transactional leadership, which focuses on exchanges between leaders and followers, may lead to avoidance or suppression of conflicts (Bass, 1985).

Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is another critical factor in effective conflict management. Leaders with high emotional intelligence (EI) are better equipped to understand and manage their own emotions, as well as those of their team members (Goleman, 1995). This ability to empathized and regulate emotions can lead to de-escalate conflicts and promote constructive resolutions. Research as opined by Mayer and Salovey (1997) supports the notion that EI is the key predictor of effective leadership and conflict management.

Communication Strategies and Conflict Management

Effective communication is an essential tool for managing conflicts in leadership dynamics. Leaders who engage active listening, empathy, and clear communication can encourage open dialogue and foster a collaborative environment (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Conversely, poor communication can exacerbate conflicts and lead to more serious misunderstandings.

The Role of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture also plays a remarkable role in shaping leadership dynamics and conflict management. Any culture that values openness, transparency, and respect courage constructive conflict management, while a culture of fear and avoidance can hinder effective conflict resolution (Schein, 2010). Leaders therefore must be aware of the cultural context in the environment which they operate and adapt their leadership styles accordingly.

Conflict Management Strategies

Conflict abound in various organizations where different people work. Obi et al. (2024) defined conflict as the expression of disagreement or aggression between two or more individuals or groups as a result of difference views, ideology, opinion or opposition over a goal, resources or interest. Conflict is inevitable in any social settings such as school where people from different values and converge to work. Clifford and Ejike (2022) opined that conflict is a disparity in the idea, view or opinion of two or more people in an organization on something that was not done or to be done in a work environment. Whenever conflict arises in an organization it is necessary that principals should handle it in or manage it the right manner using different conflict management strategies.

Conflict management strategies are methods of handling disputes. Amoda et al. (2021) defined conflict management strategy as a mechanism for resolving conflict which emphasizes absorption of conflicting parties' ideas about the conflict to facilitate the respect of conflicting interests of parties while resolving the conflict. Conflict management strategies has to do with the methods of identifying, analyzing and handling differences to prevent escalation. Obizue et al. (2020) defined conflict management strategies as the methods of dealing with every situation of difference in opinions or clashes among two or more parties.It is the way disparities are settled in school. Mbah et al. (2021) opined that conflict management strategies are approaches, methods or tactics used by an administrator during conflict situations with the intention of bringing such situation to a peaceful end in order to achieve the predetermined goals or aims of the organization. Arop et al. (2018) defined conflict management strategies as the act of planning, organizing, coordinating, leading and controlling school affairs to pre-empt, forestall and address conflict in school; it is the method of either curbing or settling disagreement that could have negative effect in the school. Uruaka and Agabi (2022) stressed that conflict management involves planning, organizing, coordinating, leading and controlling school affairs to pre-empt, forestall and address conflict in the school.

Conflict management involves controlling, and resolving misunderstanding among individuals. Principals need to be well informed about school rules, work ethics and acceptable moral behaviours in order to manage the inevitable conflict in school effectively. Binyanya (2021) pointed out that conflict management strategies are

various ways of suppressing conflicts either permanently or temporarily. Principals can use different conflict management strategies to settle issues among teachers in secondary schools Clifford and Ejike (2020) opined that conflict management strategies include, integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising. Yidana (2022) opined that avoiding, integration, accommodating, obliging, competing collaborating, dialogue/negotiation, mediation, dominance, confrontation and compromising are the conflict management strategies in educational institutions. This study will focus on avoidance, dominating, dialogue, mediating, and integrating conflict management strategies.

Avoidance conflict management is one of the methods of handling conflict in schools. Strategy involves withdrawing and suppressing the conflicting issue. It involves delaying or ignoring a conflict. Isabu (2017) maintained that when conflicts are handled by avoidance, the two parties involved in the conflict try to ignore the problem and do nothing to resolve the disagreement. Clifford and Ejike (2022) stressed that avoidance conflict management strategy is a way of not addressing a conflict, or a tactical way of postponing the conflict for a better time, if at all such time will come. In the opinion of Swetha (2021), avoidance conflict management strategy is a way of completely evading the conflict neither pursue ones interests nor those of the others involved in the dispute. Principals can use this type of conflict management strategy if they feel that the conflict is trivial and handling it will be a waste of time or if they feel that delving into it will result to some other ugly situations. Principals can also manage conflict using dominating conflict management strategy.

Dominating conflict management strategy is another type of conflict management strategy. It involves the use of threats or force to compel the conflicting parties to settle their disputes. Hareesol et al. (2019) asserted that dominating conflict management strategy involves the use of position power, aggression, verbal dominance, and perseverance in resolving or settling grievances among two or more parties. Principals may apply dominating conflict management strategy by using their authority as head of school to arrive at decision towards resolving conflict without consideration of parties views or opinions, if the conflict has lingered for long and it is also hindering the attainment of school goals (Okorji & Nzekwe, 2019). In line with this, Obi et al. (2024) stressed that public secondary school principals who use this type of conflict management technique use their authoritative power, rules, threats,and punishment to force conflicting parties to accept their ideas or opinion as the final solutions to the conflict. Ethical leaders may apply this type of conflict management strategy through the use of teacher's code of conduct to compel them to adhere rules and end disagreements that may jeopardize the peace and success of the school. Principals can as well apply dialogue conflict management strategy.

Dialogue conflict management strategy involves the resolution of conflict through dialogue. In the view of (Abdallahetal, 2021), dialogue conflict

management strategy is the decision between two or more conflicting parties to resolve their grievances without participation from a third- party. It is the seeking of solution to the cause of disagreements by the conflicting parties using dialogue. The conflicting parties decide to settle their differences without violence by themselves. They try to know the cause of their problem and willingly agree to reach at an agreement through a win- win approach. SMRITI (2021) Pointed out that dialogue conflict management strategy involves the strategies used by disputing parties to reduce tension and reach an agreement and restore peace without necessarily employing a facilitator. It is method of taking decision to settle disagreements amicably by disputing individuals or parties. Teachers can decide to resolve disagreements arising in schools in the course of teaching and learning amicably by themselves without inviting the principal. It is a process of using negotiation to arrive at a peaceful end of disagreement. In the same vein, two or more departments may disagree on an issue and decide to hold departmental meeting in order to handle any issue of disagreement. Mwaniki and Muathe (2021) opined that negotiation is a conversation made among parties especially in times of conflict whose aim is to reach a beneficial outcome for all the parties involved and to solve the issues at hand. If conflict cannot be resolved in schools through negotiation, mediation conflict management strategy may be used.

Mediating conflict management strategy is another method of resolving conflict in schools. Nte (2018) asserted that mediation conflict management strategy is the method of involving a neutral third party, acceptable to the contending parties, to preside over deliberations that enables the parties to reach a negotiated or settlement. The conflicting parties may decide to invite a third party to help to end the disagreement and bring peace or the third party may decide to intervene in the dispute willingly with the aim of helping to restore peace. Abdallah et al. (2021) pointed out that the mediator who is the third party, has no consultative or determinant role in terms of the content of the dispute or the outcome of its resolution, but may give advice on or determine the process of mediation whereby resolution is endeavoured. This type of strategy is mostly used when it is obvious that the conflicting parties are not willing or may not be able to settle their difference amicably. Principals may use this type of conflict management strategy to end disparity or quarrel between teachers through intervention as a third party. This strategy could also be used by teachers to end disagreements between their fellow teachers or among students. There are some conflicts that may need to be handled using integrating management strategies.

Integrating conflict management strategy is one of the conflict management strategies that can be used by school leaders. Kariuki et al. (2023) opined that integration conflict management strategy is a method for resolving conflict that emphasizes incorporating the viewpoints of opposing parties in order to make it easier for opposing parties to respect one another's interests while the conflict is being resolved. It has to do with going into investigation in order to find

a lasting and acceptable solutions to a conflict for the benefit of the parties involved. The integration technique appears to be the most effective since it allows warring parties to grasp their current condition and prepares them for active engagement in resolving the dispute (Fareo & Jajua, 2018). Integrating conflict management strategy involves searching for information, exchange of the information and critical examination of the information in order to arrive at a peaceful and acceptable conclusion. Principals may use this type of strategy to resolve conflicts among teachers, committees may be appointed to carry out investigations within a given time frame in order to gather facts that may be helpful in reaching at an acceptable resolution terms. The use of this type of strategy gives the conflicting parties opportunity to see reasons why the opposing party acted the way they did and then the two parties will reach a conclusive and peaceful agreement which helps to put an end to the discord or resolve the conflict.

The main aim of conflict resolution is to ensure peaceful co-existence between and among teachers. It is essential for leaders to learn to manage, minimize, and resolve disputes in their respective schools, since conflicts is inevitable in schools. Principals' experience and leadership philosophies will determine how well they can manage conflicts (Ademola, et al, 2023). This means that the way school leaders settle disagreements which is unavoidable in schools could make or mar a school. Observation by the researcher revealed that some teachers show dissatisfaction about the way some principals manage conflicts. There are cases of favouritism in conflict management by principals. Abdul et al. (2023) maintained that effective conflict management in schools encourages teachers' morals, enhances teachers' task performances, boost teachers' confidence and integrity, performances, minimize disruption stemming from the existence of a conflict, provide solution that is satisfactory and acceptable, fosters peace and unity among students, teachers and principals. In line with this, Kariuki et al. (2023) asserted that disputes create an uncomfortable, disruptive, and stressful work environment that lowers teachers' task performance. This means that poor conflict management may not enhance teacher' task performance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, leadership dynamics and conflict management are deeply interconnected, with effective leadership being a critical determinant of conflict outcomes. By understanding the impact of leadership styles, emotional intelligence, communication strategies, and organizational culture on conflict management, leaders can develop the skills necessary to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics and foster a positive work environment. By developing self-awareness, fostering open communication, and promoting collaborative problem-solving, leaders can manage conflicts in a way that strengthens relationships and enhances organizational performance. Implementing these recommendations can help leaders

navigate the complexities of conflict management and build a resilient and high-performing team.

Recommendations

1. Develop Self-Awareness and Emotional Intelligence:

Self- Reflection: Leaders should engage in regular self-reflection to understand their own emotions, triggers, and conflict management styles. Emotional Intelligence training to enhance empathy, self- regulation, and social skills.

2. Foster Open and Transparent Communication:

Active Listening: Encourage leaders to practice active listening, ensuring they fully understand the perspectives and concerns of their team members.

Clear Communication: Promote clear, concise, and respectful communication to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunications.

3. Encourage a Culture of Respect and Openness

Respectful Environment: Foster a work environment where team members feel valued, respected, and safe to express their opinions.

Open- Door Policy: Implement an open- door policy where team members can freely approach leaders with concerns or ideas.

4. Develop Conflict Management Skills through:

Training Programs: provide training programs that focus on conflict resolution techniques, negotiation skills, and mediation.

Role- Playing: Use role-playing exercises to simulate conflict scenarios and practice effective resolution strategies.

5. Promote Collaborative Problem-Solving through:

Team Building: Engage in team-building activities that promote collaboration, trust, and mutual understanding among team members.

Collaborative Approach: Encourage a collaborative approach to problem-solving, where diverse perspectives are valued and integrated.

6. Model Constructive Conflict Behavior

Role Modeling: Leaders should model constructive conflict behavior, demonstrating respect, empathy, and a willingness to listen and compromise.

Positive Reinforcement: Recognize and reward team members who handle conflicts constructively, reinforcing positive behavior.

7. Implement Structured Conflict Resolution Processes

Clear Procedures: Establish clear procedures for reporting, addressing, and resolving conflicts in a timely and fair manner.

Mediation and Arbitration: Utilize mediation and arbitration techniques to resolve conflicts that cannot be resolved through direct negotiation.

8. Foster a Growth Mindset

Learning from Conflicts: Encourage leaders and team members to view conflict as opportunitiesfor growth and learning, rather than threats.

Continuous Improvement: promote a cultural of continuous improvement, where feedback is sought and used to enhance conflict management practices.

9. **Monitor and Evaluate Conflict Management Practices**

Regular Feedback: Collect regular feedback from team members on conflict management practices and outcomes .

Performance Metrics: Develop performance metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of conflict management strategies and identify areas for improvement.

10. **Lead by Example**

Integrity and Consistency: Leaders should demonstrate integrity and consistency in their actions and decisions, setting a positive example for their team.

Accountability: Hold themselves and others accountable for managing conflicts in a constructive and respectful manner.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

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Gender Equity, Dynamics in Educational Leadership and Practices
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Introduction

Gender equity remains a central but unresolved challenge in educational leadership globally. While women constitute a significant proportion of teachers and mid-level administrators, their representation in top decision-making positions remains disproportionately low. The dynamics of educational leadership are further complicated by cultural norms, power relations, and contemporary global issues, including digital transformation, crisis management, and demands for inclusive governance.

This paper critically examines gender equity in educational leadership, situating it within feminist, transformational, and intersectional theoretical frameworks. It explores barriers and enablers of women's leadership, analyzes contemporary issues such as globalization, technological disruption, and diversity management, and provides case studies from both global and African contexts. The paper concludes with strategies and policy recommendations to promote gender-sensitive, equitable, and future-ready educational leadership. Leadership is essential for shaping effective educational systems.

Leaders influence institutional culture, drive reforms, allocate resources, and ensure quality outcomes. Yet leadership is not exercised in a vacuum: it is embedded within historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts. In many societies, leadership in education has long been male-dominated, with women underrepresented despite their numerical strength in teaching and academic fields (UNESCO, 2021).

Educational leadership in the 21st century faces two interrelated demands: advancing gender equity and responding to contemporary global challenges. Gender equity entails fair treatment, opportunities, and representation for both men and women, without discrimination. Meanwhile, leaders must grapple with the complexities of digitalization, globalization, crisis response, and equity beyond gender. This paper situates gender equity within the wider dynamics of educational leadership, emphasizing the urgent need for inclusive, responsive, and future-oriented leadership
models.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory critiques structural inequalities that sustain male dominance in leadership. It challenges patriarchal norms and advocates dismantling barriers that exclude women from decision-making (hooks, 2000). Within education, feminist leadership emphasizes collaborative governance, inclusivity, and empowerment.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership prioritizes vision, inspiration, and innovation (Northouse, 2021). It encourages leaders to transcend personal interests for institutional goals and aligns with genderequitable practices that empower marginalized groups.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership highlights empathy, community-building, and shared responsibility. It resonates with feminist principles by valuing relational and collaborative approaches to leadership.

Intersectionality

Crenshaw's (1989) concept of intersectionality demonstrates how overlapping social identities such as gender, race, and class — shape leadership opportunities. In education, intersectionality explains why women of color face double marginalization in leadership contexts.

Global Policy Frameworks

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Achieve Gender Equality) and UNESCO's Gender Equality in Education Strategy (2021–2026) provide normative guidance for promoting gender equity in leadership roles.

Gender Equity in Educational Leadership

Although progress has been made in women's access to education and professional careers, disparities persist in leadership:

1. ***Representation Gaps:*** Women dominate teaching in primary and secondary schools but are underrepresented in university leadership, ministry positions, and policy making roles (UNESCO, 2021).
2. ***Cultural and Gender Stereotypes:*** Leadership is often associated with masculine traits such as authority and assertiveness, creating bias against women leaders.
3. ***Work-Life Balance Pressures:*** Family responsibilities and caregiving duties disproportionately affect women's career progression.
4. ***Policy Deficiencies:*** Few institutions have comprehensive gender-sensitive policies or leadership quotas. For example, in Nigeria, women account for over 50% of primary school teachers but less than 20% of vice-chancellors in universities (Ogunyemi, 2020). Globally, the "glass ceiling" persists, limiting women's upward mobility.

Historical Perspectives on Women in Leadership

Globally, women's leadership in education has been constrained by colonial legacies, patriarchal traditions, and systemic exclusion. In Africa, precolonial societies often excluded women from formal governance roles, and colonial education systems reinforced gender hierarchies (Mikell, 1997).In contrast, Nordic countries such as Sweden and Norway have adopted gender quotas, resulting in significant increases in women's representation in educational leadership. These historical comparisons highlight the role of policy and culture in shaping gender equity trajectories.

Dynamics in Educational Leadership

The dynamics of leadership are influenced by both structural and personal factors:

Leadership Styles: Male leaders are often associated with directive or authoritative styles, while women are linked to transformational and participatory approaches (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Power Relations: Male-dominated boards and councils reinforce traditional hierarchies.

Mentorship and Networking: Limited access to professional networks hinders women's advancement.

Resistance and Scrutiny: Women leaders often face stricter scrutiny, stereotypes, or tokenism in leadership spaces. These dynamics produce systemic inequities that discourage women from aspiring to or retaining leadership positions.

Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership

Digital Transformation: The digital era requires leaders who can integrate technology into pedagogy, governance, and administration. However, digital divides and unequal access to ICT exacerbate inequalities, requiring gender-sensitive digital leadership strategies.

Globalization

Education systems increasingly benchmark against global standards. Leaders must balance local cultural contexts with global frameworks, creating tensions but also opportunities for reform.

Diversity and Inclusion

Beyond gender, leaders must address inequalities related to disability, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. Inclusive governance requires addressing all dimensions of marginalization.

Crisis Leadership

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed gaps in leadership preparedness, requiring leaders to pivot rapidly to online education while addressing inequities in access. Crisis leadership has become a central competency for educational leaders.

Climate Change and Sustainability

Emerging global crises such as climate change necessitate leaders who can integrate environmental education and sustainability principles into curricula and policies.

Case Studies

Rwanda: Gender quotas have significantly increased women's representation in educational leadership and politics, offering lessons for policy-driven reform (Powley, 2003).

Canada: Mentorship networks such as "Women in Educational Leadership Network" provide pathways for female leaders to build professional communities.

Nigeria: Initiatives by NGOs to train female school administrators highlight the importance of capacity-building in overcoming cultural barriers.

India: Despite high levels of female teacher participation, women remain underrepresented in leadership, underscoring the persistence of structural biases (Kabeer, 2015).

These cases illustrate both barriers and opportunities for advancing equity.

Barriers and Challenges

Persistent challenges include:

Structural Inequalities: Male-dominated institutions and boards.

Implicit Gender Bias: Subtle discrimination that undermines women's authority.

Policy-Practice Gap: Weak enforcement of gender equity policies.

Cultural Resistance: Traditional beliefs stigmatizing female leadership.

Funding and Resource Limitations: Women leaders often have less access to financial and institutional resources.

Strategies and Recommendations

1. **Gender-Sensitive Leadership Training:** Equip leaders with gender equity competencies.
2. **Policy Reforms:** Enforce leadership quotas and implement anti-discrimination laws.
3. **Mentorship and Networking Programs:** Expand access to mentorship for women leaders.
4. **Inclusive Governance Models:** Promote shared decision-making and collaborative leadership.
5. **Digital Empowerment:** Train women in digital leadership to bridge gendered digital divides.
6. **Research and Advocacy:** Strengthen data-driven advocacy for accountability in gender policies.

Conclusion

Educational leadership is pivotal to building equitable, inclusive, and future-ready educational systems. Gender equity remains central to this goal, yet systemic

inequalities continue to undermine women's access to leadership positions. Contemporary issues such as digital transformation, globalization, and crisis leadership amplify the challenges but also create opportunities for reform. Promoting gender-sensitive policies, mentorship programs, and inclusive governance is essential for ensuring that educational leadership becomes a driver of equity, diversity, and sustainable development in the 21st century.

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CHAPTER THIRTY

GENDER EQUITY AND DYNAMICS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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Introduction

Gender equity in educational leadership refers to equal access to leadership roles and the fair representation of all genders in decision-making positions within educational settings (Smith & Johnson, 2021). While progress has been made in many countries, especially regarding access to primary and secondary education, leadership hierarchies often remain gendered, disadvantaging women, gender minorities, and people from marginalized backgrounds (Walker, 2020). Understanding these dynamics is vital for achieving broader educational goals, including improved institutional performance, inclusive policy development, and social justice.

Educational leadership, traditionally dominated by male figures in many parts of the world, continues to reflect broader gender dynamics that shape who hold decision-making power within schools, colleges, and universities. Although women make up a significant proportion of teaching professionals globally, their representation in top leadership roles remains disproportionately low, underscoring persistent structural inequities and cultural norms that influence leadership trajectories.

The dynamics of gender in educational leadership involve complex interactions of socio-cultural expectations, organizational policies, and individual experiences. Research indicates that gender-responsive leadership, leadership that actively promotes equity and inclusivity can foster more supportive environments where diverse perspectives enrich decision-making and organizational outcomes. However, barriers such as stereotypes associating leadership with masculinity, limited mentorship opportunities for women, and weak implementation of gender policies continue to hinder progress toward equitable leadership representation.

Despite the equity gains that have been recently noticed across the globe, women still appear to be under-represented and thus under-utilized in those positions. Findings from the surveys conducted by Coleman (2011) show that the number of women as leaders in education is gradually growing; however, males hold the most leadership positions in both developed and developing countries with the females to be seen as exceptions to the rules and subjects to stereotyping. Shakeshaft (2006) affirms that this devaluation exists even worldwide and

women are treated differently than men across cultures receiving unequal expectations and rewards. This paper critically examines the multifaceted dynamics of gender equity in educational leadership. It discusses historical trends, systemic challenges, and recent developments aimed at promoting inclusive leadership.

Historical Trends of Gender Equity in Educational Leadership

Historically, educational leadership was dominated by men, particularly in formal leadership roles beyond the classroom. In the early 20th century, women were largely present as teachers but excluded from positions such as principals and superintendents (Brown, 2019). Over time, feminist movements and policy reforms expanded opportunities for women; however, disparities persist.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is hinged on Gender Leadership Theory and Liberal Feminism Theory. Gender Leadership Theory posits that feminine and masculine leadership stereotypes stem from a dualistic perspective that essentializes differences in how women and men are perceived to lead. It provides a more inclusive perspective on leadership that accounts for multiple viewpoints (Clisbee, 2004). This theory is grounded in the recognition that many traditional leadership theories fail to address the experiences, needs, and realities of women; reinforce the structural and cultural barriers women face; and inadequately prepare both women and men to work effectively within inclusive systems (Katz, 2001). Although, leadership continues to be associated with stereotypically masculine traits in public discourse, such perceptions are problematic, as they frame women's leadership through a deficit lens. Moreover, the increasingly competitive and target-oriented climate in education may further entrench traditional male models of leadership, often to the detriment of women leaders. This presents a contradiction, as leadership styles commonly associated with women align more closely with those that are widely valued today, such as transformational leadership (Clisbee, 2004).

Liberal Feminism Theory contributes to an understanding of gender differences and gender inequality by examining social and political power relations alongside the advancement of women's rights within the society. It is grounded in the belief that societal structures and practices disadvantage women, and it seeks to identify the causes and dimensions of women's oppression. Liberal feminism emphasizes the achievement of equality between women and men through political and legal reforms. As a reform-oriented perspective, it aims to enhance women's status within existing systems without fundamentally challenging the legitimacy or operation of those systems.

Liberal feminists argue that women possess the capacity to assert themselves and achieve equality, making social change possible without restructuring society itself. The theory focuses on the interaction between women and men as a means of promoting gender equality and rejects biological determinism as a basis for differential treatment. From this perspective, if women and men are

not inherently different, they should not be treated unequally under the law. Consequently, liberal feminism advocates equal legal rights, access to education, and employment opportunities for both genders. It seeks to dismantle discriminatory gender systems and calls on society to acknowledge women's historical contributions and their contemporary capabilities across various fields (Avgeri, 2015).

Lorber (2010) contends that women continue to experience differentiation and unequal treatment within communities due to the persistence of male-dominated power structures. As a result, senior and decision-making positions are predominantly occupied by men, while women face systemic barriers often described as a glass ceiling that limit their appointment and advancement. The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles is therefore, linked to discrimination and bias in recruitment and promotion processes. Lorber (2010) further explains that liberal feminism highlights occupational gender segregation and hierarchical structures in which men are typically positioned at the top. This theoretical framework is applicable beyond its origins in the United States and can be used to analyze gender inequality in African contexts, including Zambia, where such disparities remain evident.

Cultural Understanding of Women and Its Effects on Women Leadership in Higher Education

Cultural perceptions of women in different countries often determine whether they have the opportunity to attain the qualifications necessary for leadership roles in higher education. Reilly (2021) found that societal expectations for girls from childhood differ greatly from those for boys, particularly regarding educational pursuits. In Rwanda, for example, boys were encouraged to pursue formal education, whereas girls were often directed toward domestic responsibilities. This disparity limits the number of women who can progress through the educational system from primary school to university where advanced degrees are typically required for leadership positions.

In her study at the University of Rwanda, Reilly (2021) noted a significant gender imbalance, with men being disproportionately represented. The institution's admission practices favouring male students result in fewer highly qualified women, who must also compete rigorously for high-level leadership positions. Women comprised only 34% of admitted students, a figure largely unchanged due to cultural beliefs that women are less suited for higher education. Furthermore, fewer women attain doctoral degrees than men, often because of family-related responsibilities. This restricts the pool of women who meet the statutory qualifications needed to assume leadership roles in higher education.

Challenges of gender equity in education leadership

In recent years, growing awareness of gender disparities has highlighted that global development cannot be fully realized without empowering women as a key interest group. This is especially relevant in today's economy, where success

depends not only on capital but also on creativity and innovation. The Commonwealth of Learning (2011) noted that, despite efforts to close the gender gap, significant inequalities persist, particularly in many developing countries. According to the Global Gender Gap Report (2012), Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) remains the region furthest from achieving gender parity in educational attainment. The low rankings of SSA, including Nigeria, may largely reflect entrenched cultural beliefs in male superiority and female subordination.

Research on women in leadership has predominantly focused on the barriers they face in entering or advancing within leadership hierarchies (Fetcher, 2010). These studies often use self-report surveys or interviews, allowing women to describe the obstacles they encounter when securing or maintaining administrative positions. Avgeri (2015) categorizes these barriers as either internally or externally imposed, including factors such as unfavourable working conditions, sexual discrimination, family and household responsibilities, low self-confidence, and insufficient preparation programmes or financial support for professional development.

Avgeri (2015) further argues that women's reluctance to aspire to superintendence may stem from their experiences working under male superintendents whose leadership styles differ from women's preferred approaches. Her study, based on a desktop review of existing literature, emphasizes that women's perceptions of leadership are largely shaped by observing current administrators rather than envisioning alternative leadership models. Similarly, Fetcher (2010) found that women experience higher levels of job-related stress than men when operating in predominantly male or traditionally male-dominated environments.

Bridging the Gender Gap Through Policy

Significant progress has been made in promoting the inclusion of women and women's rights in decision-making within the education sector. Initiatives such as the Maputo Protocol and other African Union frameworks emphasize the need to close the gender gap in education and other sectors while highlighting the importance of involving women in governance and policy processes. These frameworks have created opportunities for women to contribute meaningfully to Africa's development agenda (United Nations, 2018).

African governments have also implemented policies recognizing the role of women in education systems. These policies have introduced affirmative action measures across all levels of education, including allocating more positions to women and reintegrating teenage mothers into schools. Efforts have also been made to create gender-friendly environments, with laws and guidelines established to prevent and address school-related gender-based violence (Avgeri, 2015). Additionally, some countries, including Rwanda and Kenya, have adopted gender-responsive budgeting and reserved positions for women in ministries of education

and parliaments. Women have also been appointed to leadership roles within learning institutions. While these steps represent progress, significant work remains to achieve gender equality in African education systems (Avgeri, 2015).

Despite these advancements, women academics continue to face challenges in universities, particularly regarding promotions and access to administrative roles. Research indicates that talented women worldwide still struggle to advance in their careers (Burke & Major, 2014). Barriers include male-centered definitions of merit, organizational cultures aligned with male lifestyles, and limited institutional responsiveness to the experiences of female academics (Su & Gaughan, 2014). Current efforts have yet to produce substantial gains in gender parity, especially at senior leadership levels in higher education.

The literature suggests that women are often discouraged from pursuing administrative careers due to perceptions that they lack the necessary leadership qualities. Women in male-dominated roles are expected to perform at a higher level than their male counterparts. Those aspiring to administrative positions frequently encounter institutional barriers, including exclusion from leadership training programmes, making it harder to advance. Avgeri (2015) categorizes the challenges facing women in educational administration into three main areas: family responsibilities, low self-esteem, and lack of support.

Work–Life Balance and Caregiving Responsibilities

Women disproportionately shoulder caregiving responsibilities, affecting career trajectories (Lee & Kim, 2022). Leadership roles often require long hours, travel, and networking all of which can conflict with family responsibilities. Lack of supportive workplace policies (e.g., flexible schedules, parental leave) further exacerbates inequity.

Lack of Mentorship and Networks

Access to mentorship and professional networks is crucial for career advancement. Research shows that women often have fewer mentorship opportunities and less access to influential networks compared to men (Taylor & Martinez, 2021). This gap can hinder professional visibility and leadership readiness.

Contemporary Issues in Gender Equity and Leadership

a. **Intersectionality and Multiple Marginalization:** Current research increasingly emphasizes intersectionality recognizing that gender intersects with race, class, disability, and other identities. Women of colour, for example, face dual biases that compound barriers to leadership (Ghaye, 2023). Educational systems must address how intersecting identities shape experiences and leadership access.

b. **Policy Interventions and Quotas:** Some countries have implemented gender quotas and affirmative action policies to increase women's representation in leadership. While quotas can accelerate numerical equity, critics argue that they

may not address deeper cultural biases (Verma, 2022). Effective policy must be paired with cultural change initiatives.

c. Globalization and Transnational Leadership

Globalization has influenced educational leadership practices, with international organizations promoting gender equity frameworks. For instance, UNESCO and UNICEF advocate for gender-responsive leadership and capacity building (UNESCO, 2021). However, global policies must be adapted to local socio-cultural contexts to be effective.

d. Digital Transformation and Leadership Opportunities

Digital technologies have created new leadership platforms and modes of professional engagement. Virtual leadership, online communities, and distance professional development offer opportunities for wider participation. However, digital divides especially, in low-resource contexts may replicate existing inequities if not addressed (Mills & Robinson, 2023).

Strategies for Promoting Gender Equity in Educational Leadership

1. **Policy and Institutional Reform:** Educational institutions should enact policies that support equity, such as transparent hiring practices, targeted leadership development programmes for underrepresented groups, and gender-responsive performance evaluations.
2. **Mentorship and Professional Development:** Structured mentorship programmes can help aspiring leaders build skills, confidence, and networks. Peer support groups and leadership academies targeted at women and gender minorities can reduce barriers to entry.

3. **Cultural Change Initiatives:** Addressing organizational culture is fundamental. Workshops, bias training, and leadership dialogues can challenge stereotypes and create more inclusive environments.
4. **Supporting Work-Life Integration:** Flexible work policies, family-friendly practices, and equitable parental leave can mitigate the disproportionate impact of caregiving responsibilities on career progression.

Conclusion

Gender equity in educational leadership remains an ongoing challenge shaped by historical patterns, cultural norms, organizational structures, and evolving contemporary issues. Achieving meaningful equity requires intersectional approaches, supportive policies, cultural transformation, and sustained institutional commitment. Future research should continue exploring how emerging trends such as digital leadership and globalization affect gender dynamics. Equally important is ensuring that policies designed to enhance equity are context-sensitive and grounded in the lived experiences of diverse educators.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

BREAKING BARRIERS: ADVANCING GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Introduction

Gender equity in education and leadership remains a central challenge in the modern world. Although there has been progress in giving girls and women greater access to education, men still dominate most leadership positions in schools, colleges, and universities. This creates a major contradiction because educational institutions promote fairness but often fail to practice it in their structures of power. For example, women are the majority of lecturers in many tertiary institutions but they rarely rise to top leadership positions such as that of vice-chancellors. This imbalance weakens the ability of education to serve as an engine of fairness and social justice. When women and other groups are excluded, decision-making is less inclusive and institutions are less responsive to the needs of their diverse populations. Ensuring gender equity in leadership therefore remains one of the most urgent goals for education in the 21st century (UNESCO, 2025; Osei-Akoto & Boateng, 2023).

Gender equity must be distinguished from gender equality to fully understand its importance. Equality is about giving the same rights and opportunities to men and women, while equity focuses on fairness by addressing the unique barriers some groups face. A woman with the same qualifications as a man may still struggle to be promoted if cultural stereotypes suggest men make better leaders. Removing such barriers is central to equity. Educational leadership itself refers to the process of guiding institutions by making decisions, developing policies, and setting the culture that drives learning and teaching. Leaders hold the authority to shape opportunities and distribute resources, meaning they directly influence whether fairness becomes a reality. Without equity at the leadership level, educational institutions risk continuing the same patterns of exclusion that they are expected to correct (Akinola, 2022; Madsen et al., 2023).

The dynamics of educational leadership show how gender relations shape opportunities, power, and influence. Dynamics here means the interactions, processes, and forces that determine who gets access to leadership and how decisions are made. Research shows that women often face shifting obstacles

described as the glass ceiling, sticky floor, and leadership labyrinth, which all make progress difficult. For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, women make up most teachers but hold less than 20 percent of school headships. In Nigeria, many female academics tend to face promotion delays due to stereotypes, lack of mentors, or family expectations. These dynamics limit diversity in leadership and reduce the richness of perspectives in decision-making. When leadership is not inclusive, policies risk reflecting only one dominant view, rather than serving the broad community of learners and educators (Johnson, 2022; Oduro & Sackey, 2023).

This chapter will examine contemporary issues in achieving gender equity in educational leadership. These include cultural norms that discourage women from seeking leadership, institutional structures that favour men, and personal challenges such as low confidence caused by discrimination. At the same time, the chapter will highlight positive developments such as mentorship networks, policy reforms, and leadership training that help women break through barriers. Ultimately, the chapter argues that inclusive leadership is not only about fairness but also about building stronger, more effective educational systems that reflect the diversity of their communities (Abubakar & Adeyemi, 2024; Mlambo & Khoza, 2022).

Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives

Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expectations, and identities that societies assign to people based on whether they are male, female, or non-binary. It is different from *sex*, which relates to biological differences. Gender shapes how people are expected to act, the responsibilities they are given, and the opportunities available to them. For example, in many cultures, leadership is seen as a male trait, while caregiving and teaching are associated with women. These socially created expectations influence who is considered suitable for educational leadership. Gender, therefore, is not fixed; it changes across societies and time periods, making it a dynamic concept. Understanding gender is important in education because it explains why women may face stereotypes, fewer chances, and more barriers compared to men in reaching leadership positions. Without a clear grasp of gender, it becomes difficult to design fair policies that promote inclusiveness in schools and universities (Connell, 2022; Mlambo & Khoza, 2022).

Gender Equity

Gender equity refers to fairness in the distribution of opportunities, resources, and responsibilities across genders, while recognizing that men and women often face different starting points in society. Unlike a one-size-fits-all approach, equity acknowledges that women may require additional support, such as mentorship or flexible work arrangements, to overcome systemic disadvantages. For example, in many countries, women make up a large share of the teaching

workforce but remain underrepresented in leadership positions. Equity ensures that barriers such as stereotypes, discriminatory policies, or unequal access to networks are addressed so that both men and women can compete fairly. It is therefore about justice in outcomes, not just in access. Educational institutions that pursue equity in leadership are more likely to create environments where diverse voices contribute to decision-making, improving responsiveness to staff and student needs (Osei-Akoto & Boateng, 2023; UNESCO, 2025).

Gender Equality

Gender equality, though closely related to equity, carries a different meaning. It refers to giving men and women the same rights, responsibilities, and opportunities without distinction. While equality is necessary, it often does not go far enough because it assumes that identical treatment leads to fairness. For instance, if both male and female lecturers are given the same promotion requirements, but women face cultural or institutional biases, equality alone will not close the gap. This is why equity is considered a more practical approach to correcting imbalances. Equality focuses on sameness in rules and standards, whereas equity addresses the structural and cultural factors that create disadvantages. In leadership contexts, equality might open positions to all genders, but without equity, systemic barriers still prevent women from rising to top roles. Understanding this difference is important because policies built only on equality often fail to achieve real fairness (Akinola, 2022; Madsen et al., 2023).

Educational Leadership

Educational leadership refers to the process of guiding, managing, and shaping the vision of educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities. Leaders are responsible for setting goals, designing policies, allocating resources, and creating a culture that supports learning. Leadership is not only about administration; it is also about inspiring and empowering teachers, students, and communities to achieve shared goals. In the context of gender, leadership plays a decisive role in determining whether equity and equality are practiced or ignored. For example, a school principal who values gender equity may implement mentorship programmes to prepare female teachers for headship roles, while one who does not prioritize equity may allow stereotypes to shape hiring and promotions. Thus, leadership is both a position of authority and a process of influence that can either challenge or reinforce existing gender imbalances. Clarifying leadership alongside equity makes clear that fairness in education depends heavily on the values and practices of those in charge (Johnson, 2022; Abubakar & Adeyemi, 2024).

Institutional Barriers

Institutional barriers are the rules, policies, traditions, and practices within organizations that make it harder for women to reach leadership roles. These barriers may not always be visible, but they shape the daily experiences of

teachers and administrators. For example, promotion systems that reward years of uninterrupted service often disadvantage women, who may take career breaks for family care. Similarly, male-dominated leadership boards may unconsciously favour male candidates for senior positions. Lack of mentorship, rigid work schedules, and limited support for balancing work and family are also common obstacles. In higher education, women sometimes face stereotypes that question their competence, even when they meet all professional requirements. These barriers create a cycle where women remain underrepresented in leadership, and decisions continue to reflect male perspectives. Removing institutional barriers requires deliberate reforms, such as gender-sensitive policies, inclusive recruitment practices, and accountability mechanisms to ensure fairness (Eagly & Carli, 2023; Abubakar, 2024).

Relevant Theoretical Perspectives

To understand gender equity in educational leadership requires a clear theoretical base. Feminist leadership, transformational leadership, and intersectionality explain persistent inequalities, highlight fairness and inclusivity, and recognize diverse experiences. These perspectives clarify the barriers women face and suggest practical ways to build more equitable systems (Madsen, 2023; Priola & Brannan, 2022).

Feminist Leadership Theory

Feminist leadership theory emerged strongly in the late 20th century, particularly from the work of feminist scholars and activists such as Srilatha Batliwala (1990s–2000s), who conceptualized feminist leadership in development and organizational contexts. Earlier foundations are rooted in second-wave feminism of the 1960s–1980s, which challenged male-dominated structures of leadership. Batliwala (2010) and subsequent scholars outlined that leadership should be inclusive, collective, transparent, and focused on dismantling power imbalances. The main tenets of feminist leadership theory include:

1. Collective and participatory decision-making rather than hierarchical control.
2. Power sharing and accountability, where leaders use authority to uplift marginalized voices.
3. Fairness and inclusivity, ensuring that leadership reflects diverse experiences.
4. Challenging patriarchy and structural inequalities that limit women's access to leadership.
5. Values-based leadership, emphasizing empathy, care, and social justice.

Feminist leadership theory is central to this chapter because it directly tackles *gender* equity in educational leadership. Despite women forming the majority in teaching, leadership in schools and universities remains male-dominated. The theory promotes mentoring women into leadership, challenging stereotypes, and fostering inclusive decision-making. For example, a female principal applying feminist leadership may create mentoring circles to prepare younger women for leadership

roles. This shows that leadership is not only about authority but also about transforming structures that sustain inequality (Batliwala, 2010; Priola & Brannan, 2022).

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory was first introduced by James V. Downton in 1973, but it was James MacGregor Burns (1978) who gave it prominence in his work *Leadership*. Burns described transformational leaders as those who inspire followers by appealing to higher values and shared goals, rather than relying only on authority or rewards. The concept was later expanded by Bernard Bass (1985, 1990s), who developed it into a widely used leadership framework. The main tenets of transformational leadership include:

1. Idealized influence – leaders act as role models with integrity and vision.
2. Inspirational motivation – leaders communicate a compelling vision that inspires others.
3. Intellectual stimulation – leaders encourage creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving.
4. Individualized consideration – leaders mentor, support, and recognize the unique needs of followers.

Transformational leadership is important to this chapter because it fosters inclusiveness and empowerment, directly supporting gender equity in education. Leaders such as vice-chancellors or school heads can inspire fairness by motivating staff, challenging bias, and encouraging women to take leadership roles. For instance, transformational leaders may establish mentorship programmes, revise promotion systems, and promote a culture that values diversity. Unlike authoritarian styles that reinforce patriarchal norms, transformational leadership drives cultural change, shared vision, and inclusive practices. It is therefore highly relevant for addressing gender dynamics in educational leadership, offering both the vision and tools for equity (Burns, 1978; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Madsen et al., 2023).

Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality was first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 in her seminal article on Black women's experiences of discrimination within both feminist and anti-racist frameworks. Crenshaw argued that traditional approaches often treated gender and race as separate issues, overlooking the fact that women's experiences are shaped by overlapping and interconnected identities. Since then, intersectionality has become a critical framework in gender studies, education, and leadership research. The main tenets of intersectionality include:

1. Multiple identities – individuals hold more than one identity (e.g., gender, race, class, age, disability).
2. Overlapping oppressions – disadvantages are not experienced separately but interact to create unique barriers.

3. Context matters – the impact of discrimination depends on social, cultural, and institutional settings.
4. Inclusive policy-making – addressing inequality requires considering the full complexity of people's identities.

Intersectionality is essential in this chapter because it explains why women in educational leadership face different challenges based on their backgrounds. A female lecturer from a minority group, for example, may deal with both gender bias and cultural prejudice, while younger women may also face age discrimination. Intersectionality shows that equity policies must go beyond a one-size-fits-all approach by considering factors such as class, ethnicity, or rural-urban differences. This framework ensures that leadership development is inclusive and responsive to diverse realities (Crenshaw, 1989; Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2022).

Current Trends and Statistics on Women in Educational Leadership

Globally, the representation of women in educational leadership has grown but still lags behind men. As of 2025, only about 27 percent of the world's top 200 universities are led by women vice-chancellors or presidents, a small improvement from 25 percent in 2024 (Dataphyte, 2025). UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report (2024-25) also shows that while women make up about 44 percent of academic staff worldwide, they hold only around 30 percent of leadership roles in higher education. In primary and secondary schools across many countries, women dominate teaching positions but remain underrepresented as principals, with gaps averaging 20 percentage points between female teachers and female school heads. These figures highlight a slow but steady trend toward greater representation, yet they also confirm that institutional barriers continue to restrict women's progression to top leadership roles.

In Nigeria, the gap is even wider. Out of 258 vice-chancellors across universities, only 12 are women, representing less than 5 percent of leadership at the highest level (Dataphyte, 2025). Women also account for only about 23 percent of researchers in the country, reflecting low participation in academic leadership pipelines. Despite the fact that Nigerian women are well represented in teaching professions, their presence significantly declines at higher administrative levels, such as provosts, rectors, and vice-chancellors. These statistics show that cultural norms, patriarchal structures, and institutional biases continue to block women's advancement in education. The trend suggests that while progress is being recorded globally, Nigeria and many African countries still face major challenges in achieving gender equity in educational leadership.

Global Best Practices

Across the world, several best practices have been adopted to improve gender equity in educational leadership. Many institutions now implement gender mainstreaming policies, which integrate gender considerations into recruitment, promotion, and decision-making processes. For example, universities in Canada and

the United Kingdom have adopted transparent promotion systems and mentorship programmes that specifically support women in advancing to leadership roles. In Scandinavia, policies on parental leave and flexible work schedules have made it easier for women to combine leadership with family responsibilities. Globally, leadership training programmes for women are increasingly popular, helping female teachers and lecturers to develop skills for senior roles. Another best practice is the adoption of gender quotas or targets in boards and academic councils, which has increased women's visibility in leadership positions. These approaches show that progress is possible when equity is treated not just as a goal but as an institutional culture backed by policies and accountability mechanisms (UNESCO, 2024; Madsen et al., 2023).

Barriers to Gender Equity in Educational Leadership

Despite growing conversations about gender equity in education, many barriers still prevent women from advancing into leadership roles. These barriers are not isolated but interconnected, cutting across cultural, institutional, economic, psychological, and social dimensions. Understanding them is critical for identifying effective solutions to close the leadership gap.

1. ***Cultural and Social Barriers:*** Cultural and social expectations remain a major barrier, as leadership is often seen as a male role while women are expected to focus on family. In Nigeria, female academics seeking leadership are criticized as "too ambitious," which undermines confidence, reduces support, and limits access to decision-making roles (Eagly & Heilman, 2022).
2. ***Institutional and Structural Barriers:*** Institutional and structural barriers also limit women's leadership. Promotion systems in universities often reward uninterrupted service, disadvantaging women who take career breaks for childcare. Male-dominated selection panels and lack of support such as mentorship or flexible schedules further restrict opportunities, keeping many qualified women out of leadership (Priola & Brannan, 2022; Madsen, 2023).
3. ***Economic and Political Barriers:*** Economic and political barriers further limit women's access to leadership. Many women have fewer opportunities for scholarships, research funding, or training, reducing their chances of meeting leadership requirements. Leadership appointments are also shaped by male-dominated patronage networks, sidelining qualified women and reinforcing underrepresentation (Johnson, 2022; UNESCO, 2024).
4. ***Work–Life Balance:*** Work–life balance remains a major barrier to women's leadership. Demanding roles often clash with caregiving duties, as women carry a larger share of domestic work. Without flexible policies such as childcare or parental leave, many women struggle to combine family responsibilities with leadership, leading to fewer applications and high dropout rates (UNESCO, 2024).
5. ***Limited Mentorship Opportunities:*** Limited mentorship also hinders women's advancement. Few female role models in leadership leave women without guidance

to navigate promotions or institutional politics. The absence of structured mentorship programmes in many universities widens this gap, while men often benefit from informal networks and sponsorship (Madsen et al., 2023).

6. ***Psychological Barriers:*** Psychological barriers such as self-doubt and imposter syndrome discourage women from pursuing leadership. Even qualified candidates fear criticism or conflicting expectations, where assertiveness is judged as "too strong" and collaboration as "too weak." These double standards place emotional burdens that hinder women's success (Madsen, 2023).

7. ***Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Discrimination:*** Finally, sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination remain major barriers. Women often face unsafe work environments, unequal pay, or exclusion from decision-making, which undermines their authority. Weak institutional responses, especially in African contexts, worsen these challenges and discourage women from pursuing leadership (Priola & Brannan, 2022; Johnson, 2022).

Strategies for Advancing Gender Equity in Educational Leadership

Promoting gender equity in educational leadership requires practical steps that directly respond to the barriers women face. The strategies below align with the earlier identified challenges and provide clear pathways for change.

1. ***Addressing Cultural and Social Barriers:*** To challenge cultural and social norms that portray leadership as male-dominated, societies must embrace awareness campaigns, advocacy, and role modeling. Media, schools, and professional organizations should highlight successful women in leadership to inspire others and change stereotypes. Encouraging girls and young women to take on leadership responsibilities early also helps dismantle negative cultural perceptions. When communities see women balancing leadership and family roles effectively, it helps normalize women in authority (Eagly & Heilman, 2022).

2. ***Overcoming Institutional and Structural Barriers:*** Institutions need transparent recruitment and promotion systems that prioritize merit over gender bias. Universities and colleges should review policies that penalize career breaks, ensuring women are not disadvantaged for family responsibilities. Introducing gender mainstreaming policies, quotas, and affirmative action can ensure women are represented in committees and leadership appointments. Providing childcare centers and flexible schedules within institutions also reduces structural disadvantages (Priola & Brannan, 2022; Madsen, 2023).

3. ***Tackling Economic and Political Barriers:*** Economic empowerment is vital to women's advancement in leadership. Governments and institutions should provide scholarships, research grants, and training opportunities specifically targeted at women. Policies that ensure equitable access to leadership development programmes will strengthen women's career pipelines. Politically, leadership selection processes should be made transparent and less influenced by patronage

systems. Advocacy for women's inclusion in decision-making bodies is also necessary to reduce political exclusion (Johnson, 2022; UNESCO, 2024).

4. ***Supporting Work-Life Balance:*** Work–life balance can be achieved by adopting **family-friendly policies**. Institutions should provide maternity and paternity leave, flexible schedules, and accessible childcare services. Leadership roles should also be structured to allow flexibility, ensuring women can manage both professional and family responsibilities. Countries that have adopted such policies show higher retention of women in leadership, suggesting these practices are effective models for African institutions (UNESCO, 2024).

5. ***Expanding Mentorship Opportunities:*** To address the lack of mentorship, institutions should establish formal mentorship and sponsorship programmes. Senior leaders can mentor younger women, providing guidance, advocacy, and professional networking. Sponsorship is especially important because it involves actively recommending women for leadership positions and protecting their visibility in male-dominated spaces. Creating platforms for peer mentorship among women leaders can also build confidence and resilience (Madsen et al., 2023).

6. ***Reducing Psychological Barriers:*** Psychological barriers such as self-doubt and imposter syndrome can be reduced through capacity-building workshops, confidence training, and peer support groups. Leadership development programmes tailored for women should not only teach technical skills but also address psychological resilience. Highlighting the success of female leaders and creating safe spaces for women to share experiences can help build self-confidence. Encouraging women to compete for leadership roles without fear of stigma is key to breaking this barrier (Eagly & Heilman, 2022).

7. ***Combating Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Discrimination:*** Institutions must adopt zero-tolerance policies on sexual harassment and discrimination, backed by strong enforcement mechanisms. Independent reporting systems should protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable. Gender sensitivity training for staff and leadership teams can reduce unconscious bias and discriminatory practices. By ensuring safe and respectful workplaces, institutions not only protect women but also encourage them to remain and thrive in leadership roles (Priola & Brannan, 2022; Johnson, 2022).

Gender Equity, Leadership, and Educational Quality

Beyond fairness, gender equity in educational leadership directly improves the quality of education. Research shows that diverse leadership teams make better decisions, foster innovation, and create more inclusive learning environments. In schools, colleges, and universities, the presence of women in leadership brings perspectives that often prioritize collaboration, student welfare, and community engagement. For example, female leaders have been shown to implement policies that support inclusive curricula, mentorship for marginalized students, and gender-sensitive disciplinary approaches. This not only improves institutional governance

but also enhances student learning outcomes by creating safe, supportive, and equitable spaces. In contexts like Nigeria, where education faces challenges of underfunding and inequality, gender-balanced leadership can be a transformative force in making institutions more accountable, responsive, and socially relevant. Thus, achieving gender equity is not merely a justice issue but also a strategy for raising the overall standard and impact of education (Eagly & Heilman, 2022; UNESCO, 2024).

Future Directions

The future of gender equity in educational leadership lies in adopting inclusive and transformative models that replace hierarchical and control-driven approaches with collaboration, empathy, and diversity. Inclusive leadership ensures representation of all voices, while transformative leadership reshapes institutional cultures to challenge power imbalances and foster fairness. As more women attain leadership roles, educational institutions become more dynamic, innovative, and responsive to societal needs. At the same time, linking gender justice with sustainable educational development ensures that women are not only included but empowered to thrive, leading to systems that are equitable, socially sustainable, and aligned with global goals such as SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 4 (quality education). Embedding gender equity in leadership thus advances both educational effectiveness and broader social progress (Madsen et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2024).

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the critical issue of gender equity in educational leadership, emphasizing its importance for building inclusive, fair, and sustainable institutions. Concepts such as gender, gender equity, equality, and leadership were clarified to establish a strong foundation for understanding the challenges women face in leadership roles. Theoretical perspectives, including feminist leadership, transformational leadership, and intersectionality, provided insight into the systemic and structural forces that shape women's leadership experiences. Current trends and statistics further revealed the underrepresentation of women in top educational leadership positions, both globally and in Africa, underscoring the urgency of addressing the gaps.

Barriers such as cultural and social norms, institutional structures, economic and political exclusion, work–life balance struggles, limited mentorship, psychological constraints, and gender-based harassment were examined as significant obstacles to achieving equity. Strategies for addressing these barriers highlighted the need for reforms that include cultural change, policy adjustments, targeted mentorship, economic empowerment, psychological support, and stronger institutional protections against discrimination. Importantly, it was emphasized that gender equity in leadership is not only a fairness issue but also a driver of educational quality. When women are equally represented in leadership, institutions benefit from diverse perspectives, more inclusive governance, and policies that better respond to

the needs of students and staff, ultimately raising the overall effectiveness of education.

Future directions pointed to the importance of adopting inclusive and transformative leadership models and linking gender justice to sustainable educational development. In conclusion, advancing gender equity in educational leadership is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for the growth and effectiveness of educational institutions. Removing systemic barriers and creating supportive environments will empower more women to take up leadership roles, thereby enriching leadership with diversity, innovation, and inclusivity. By committing to gender justice and sustainable development, educational institutions can set the pace for broader societal transformation, ensuring that leadership in education reflects the values of fairness, quality, equality, and shared progress.

Policy Way Forward

The following recommendations are designed to address cultural, institutional, economic, and personal challenges, offering clear pathways for change.

1. Governments and regulatory agencies should establish and enforce policies that guarantee equitable representation of women in educational leadership positions. Quotas or minimum representation standards can be introduced to ensure women are given fair opportunities to occupy vice-chancellor, provost, and dean positions.
2. Educational institutions should review promotion and leadership selection processes to eliminate systemic biases. This includes redesigning promotion criteria to account for career breaks, providing flexible work arrangements, and creating inclusive recruitment panels with gender-balanced representation.
3. Universities and colleges should provide structured mentorship programmes where senior female leaders guide younger women aspiring to leadership roles. Capacity-building workshops and targeted training programmes should also be implemented to strengthen women's leadership skills and confidence.
4. Institutions should introduce family-friendly policies such as accessible childcare facilities, parental leave, and flexible schedules. These measures will enable women to balance professional and personal responsibilities without being disadvantaged in leadership advancement.
5. Stronger institutional frameworks must be developed to prevent and respond to harassment and discrimination. This should include clear reporting systems, strict penalties for offenders, and continuous sensitization programmes to promote respectful workplace cultures.
6. Female academics should be given equitable access to research funding, scholarships, and leadership development grants. Targeted economic support can reduce barriers created by unequal access to financial and academic resources, enabling more women to compete for leadership roles.

7. Educational leaders should embrace leadership models that emphasize collaboration, empathy, diversity, and fairness. Institutions should consciously shift from rigid hierarchical models to inclusive systems that value contributions from both men and women, creating spaces where gender justice drives sustainable educational development.
8. Governments and institutions should collect, publish, and review gender-disaggregated data on leadership appointments, promotions, and pay gaps. Regular monitoring and accountability frameworks will help track progress and identify areas where women remain underrepresented.
9. Men in leadership positions should be actively engaged as allies in advancing gender equity. Training programmes and awareness campaigns can encourage male leaders to challenge stereotypes, support female colleagues, and advocate for inclusive policies. Gender equity should not be seen as a "women's issue" but as a collective responsibility.
10. Female leaders in education should be encouraged to join or establish regional and global professional networks. Such platforms provide mentorship, collaboration, and advocacy opportunities, empowering women to share best practices and collectively push for gender equity at national and international levels.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

GENDER EQUITY IN AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Gender equity has become a central theme in contemporary development discourse, particularly in sectors such as agriculture and agribusiness where livelihoods, food security, and economic transformation are deeply interconnected. Agribusiness plays a strategic role in Nigeria's economy, serving as a major source of employment, income generation, rural development, and food supply. It encompasses a wide range of activities including agricultural production, processing, storage, transportation, marketing, and distribution, and links millions of smallholder farmers to local, national, and international markets. Within this system, women constitute a substantial proportion of the agricultural labour force and are actively involved across multiple stages of agricultural value chains.

Empirical evidence consistently shows that women are not only producers but also processors, traders, and custodians of household nutrition and food security. Addo et al. (2024) demonstrated that women across West Africa, including Nigeria, play central roles in food systems, engaging in land preparation, planting, harvesting, processing, distribution, marketing, and household food consumption. These activities significantly influence food security, food sovereignty, and household welfare. However, despite their extensive involvement, women's contributions are often undervalued, poorly remunerated, and rendered invisible in official economic statistics.

Gender inequities in agribusiness are deeply rooted in structural and institutional arrangements that shape access to resources, opportunities, and power. Socio-cultural norms, patriarchal inheritance systems, discriminatory land tenure regimes, weak financial inclusion frameworks, and limited access to education and extension services systematically disadvantage women. These structural barriers confine women to low-return, informal, and labour-intensive segments of agribusiness, while men dominate capital-intensive, high-value, and leadership-oriented segments. Chete (2018), for instance, found that enterprise ownership, large-scale production, and high sales volumes in rice agribusiness were mostly associated with male farmers, while women were concentrated in small-scale operations with limited profit margins.

From an economic perspective, gender inequality in agribusiness undermines productivity, efficiency, and sectoral performance. When women lack access to land, credit, technology, and training, their productive potential remains underutilized, leading to allocative inefficiencies and lost economic opportunities. Yisa et al. (2020) showed that male farmers were more technically efficient than female farmers, not because of differences in skills or motivation, but due to unequal access to productive resources. This implies that gender equity is not only a social justice issue but also a critical economic concern.

Furthermore, gender inequality has serious implications for food security and resilience of agricultural systems. Women play key roles in household food production, processing, storage, and consumption decisions. Their marginalization weakens the resilience of food systems and increases vulnerability to food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty. In the context of climate change and economic shocks, Bryan et al. (2024) argued that gender-blind agricultural interventions risk exacerbating inequalities by increasing women's labour burden and reducing their adaptive capacity.

Rationale and Scope of the Chapter

The rationale for this chapter is grounded in the persistent and systemic nature of gender inequality within Nigeria's agribusiness sector, despite decades of development interventions and policy reforms. Although, various gender policies, agricultural development programmes, and financial inclusion initiatives exist in Nigeria, empirical evidence indicates that gender gaps in access to productive resources, enterprise ownership, leadership positions, and income remain widespread. This suggests that existing interventions have been insufficiently transformative and have failed to address the underlying structural causes of inequality.

Moreover, international development frameworks, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasize the importance of mainstreaming gender into economic and agricultural policies. SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) explicitly recognize that achieving sustainable development requires empowering women and ensuring their full participation in agricultural and economic systems. In the Nigerian context, however, the persistence of gender disparities in agribusiness management poses a major obstacle to achieving these global development targets.

Against this backdrop, the scope of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive and critical analysis of gender equity in agribusiness management in Nigeria. The chapter synthesizes empirical evidence from recent studies to examine gender dynamics across agricultural value chains, patterns of access to productive resources, institutional and socio-cultural constraints faced by women, and the implications of gender inequality for productivity, enterprise growth, and food security. It also highlights successful interventions, including corporate social responsibility initiatives, financial inclusion programmes, leadership development

efforts, and gender mainstreaming strategies that have contributed to improving women's participation in agribusiness.

By situating gender equity within broader economic, institutional, and socio-cultural contexts, the chapter moves beyond descriptive accounts of women's participation and provides a deeper analytical understanding of how agribusiness systems reproduce or challenge gender inequalities. Ultimately, the chapter contributes to ongoing scholarly and policy debates by demonstrating that gender equity is not a peripheral or symbolic issue, but a fundamental pillar of sustainable agribusiness development, inclusive economic growth, and long-term food security in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification of Gender Equity in Agribusiness

Gender equity refers to the principle of fairness in the distribution of rights, responsibilities, resources, and opportunities between men and women, taking into account existing structural disadvantages. In agribusiness, gender equity implies that women and men should have comparable opportunities to participate in agricultural production, processing, marketing, enterprise ownership, financial management, and leadership. This includes equitable access to land, credit, extension services, technology, education, training, markets, and institutional support systems.

Empirical studies consistently show that women in Nigeria are heavily involved in agribusiness activities, yet their participation is often concentrated in low-return segments such as small-scale production, informal processing, and petty trading. Addo *et al.* (2024) demonstrated that women across West Africa, including Nigeria, are central actors in food systems, actively engaged in production, processing, distribution, and marketing. However, their roles are rarely matched with control over strategic resources and managerial authority, which limits their capacity to benefit fully from agribusiness opportunities. From a conceptual standpoint, gender equity in agribusiness is therefore, understood as the removal of structural barriers that constrain women's participation and leadership, and the creation of enabling environments that allow both men and women to realize their productive potential.

Feminist Theory and Agribusiness

Feminist theory provides a critical foundation for analysing gender relations in agribusiness. It argues that gender inequalities are socially constructed and embedded within political, economic, legal, and cultural institutions. These institutions systematically privilege men while marginalizing women, particularly in access to economic resources and leadership positions. Jamri (2020), using feminist theory, explained that women's limited participation in agripreneurship in North-Eastern Nigeria was not due to lack of interest or ability, but rather a result of cultural norms, patriarchal values, and weak institutional support systems. Women were found to face cultural restrictions, limited government support, and exclusion

from entrepreneurial networks, which constrained their agribusiness growth and leadership potential. Within the context of agribusiness management, feminist theory highlights how ownership of land, access to finance, and control of production decisions are deeply gendered. These structures reproduce inequality by positioning men as managers and owners, while women remain labour providers and informal operators.

Feminist Political Economy Perspective

The feminist political economy framework deepens this analysis by situating gender inequality within broader power relations, market structures, and institutional arrangements. It emphasizes that economic systems are not gender-neutral, and that markets, policies, and institutions systematically reproduce gendered access to resources and opportunities. Ankrah et al. (2020), applying feminist political economy, demonstrated that access to land, extension services, and agricultural information among maize farmers remained strongly gendered, while access to credit and labour appeared ungendered. Importantly, the study showed that gendered access to resources intersected with class, education, age, and socio-cultural norms in shaping control over productive assets. This perspective is particularly relevant to agribusiness management in Nigeria, where women's economic participation is constrained not only by gender, but also by poverty, low education, legal barriers, and weak institutional support. Feminist political economy therefore provides a lens for understanding gender inequality as a systemic outcome of how economic and social systems are organized.

Gender Mainstreaming Framework

Gender mainstreaming is another key conceptual framework adopted in this chapter. It refers to the systematic integration of gender considerations into all policies, programmes, institutional processes, and development interventions. Gender mainstreaming aims to ensure that both men and women benefit equitably from development initiatives and that gender inequalities are not reproduced or reinforced. Jamri (2020) found that gender mainstreaming played a significant role in achieving sustainable development in North-Eastern Nigeria, particularly through women's inclusion in agripreneurship programmes, access to training, and financial support schemes. Similarly, Nnadi et al. (2021) argued that gender-specific and equitable interventions were necessary for mainstreaming gender into agricultural response strategies, as gender-blind policies tended to exacerbate inequalities. In agribusiness management, gender mainstreaming implies designing policies and programmes that deliberately target women's inclusion in leadership roles, financial systems, extension services, enterprise ownership, and market participation.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Institutional Gender Framework

An emerging theoretical contribution to gender equity in agribusiness is the institutional gender framework anchored in corporate social responsibility (CSR). This framework recognizes the role of private sector institutions in addressing gender inequalities through inclusive business models and community development programmes. Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2024) demonstrated that CSR initiatives by multinational oil companies significantly promoted gender-equitable agricultural value chains in the Niger Delta. Their study showed that institutional mechanisms such as the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) improved women's participation in agribusiness, access to productive resources, and integration into value chains. Similarly, Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2023) found that CSR interventions enhanced women's land rights through joint titling, land leasing, and land certification schemes. This framework highlights that gender equity in agribusiness is not solely a government responsibility but requires active participation from private sector actors, development agencies, and community institutions.

Integrated Conceptual Framework for the Chapter

Based on the reviewed theories and empirical evidence, this chapter adopts an integrated conceptual framework in which gender equity in agribusiness management is shaped by four interacting dimensions:

a) ***Structural Factors:*** cultural norms, patriarchy, legal systems, and social values that define gender roles.

b) ***Institutional Factor:*** policies, financial systems, extension services, land tenure systems, and corporate interventions.

c) ***Economic Factors:*** access to land, credit, technology, education, and markets.

d) ***Agency and Leadership Factors:*** women's skills, decision-making power, entrepreneurship capacity, and leadership development.

These dimensions collectively influence women's participation, performance, and leadership in agribusiness enterprises. The framework therefore conceptualizes gender equity in agribusiness as a product of institutional reforms, economic inclusion, cultural transformation, and empowerment-oriented policies, rather than individual effort alone.

Overview of Agribusiness in Nigeria

a. Structure and Scope of Agribusiness in Nigeria

Agribusiness in Nigeria comprises a wide range of interconnected activities that include agricultural input supply, primary production, processing, storage, transportation, marketing, and distribution of agricultural commodities. It represents one of the most important sectors of the Nigerian economy and plays a strategic role in employment generation, poverty reduction, food security, and rural development. The sector cuts across major value chains such as rice, cassava, maize, poultry, aquaculture, vegetables, oil palm, and livestock, and involves both formal and informal enterprises. Nigeria's agribusiness structure is largely

dominated by smallholder farmers who account for over 80 percent of agricultural output. These farmers operate within fragmented land systems, weak financial markets, limited access to modern technologies, and poor infrastructure. Despite these challenges, agribusiness remains a major livelihood source, particularly for rural households and women, who constitute a substantial proportion of the agricultural workforce.

b. Role of Women in Nigerian Agribusiness

Women play a central role in Nigeria's agribusiness system. Addo et al. (2024) demonstrated that women across West Africa, including Nigeria, are actively involved in land preparation, planting, harvesting, processing, distribution, marketing, and household food consumption. Their engagement extends beyond primary production into post-harvest and market-oriented activities, thereby contributing significantly to food security, food sovereignty, and household welfare. However, women's contributions are often undervalued and poorly remunerated. They are mostly concentrated in small-scale and informal agribusiness activities with limited profit margins. This pattern reflects structural inequalities in access to capital, technology, education, and institutional support.

c. Gendered Patterns of Agribusiness Growth

Agribusiness growth in Nigeria has not been gender-neutral. Chete (2018) found that larger farm sizes, commercial production, and enterprise ownership were mostly associated with male respondents in southwestern Nigeria. Men also dominated high-value segments such as mechanized farming and export-oriented agribusiness, while women were concentrated in low-capital and labour-intensive segments. This reveals a structural paradox: although women contribute significantly to agribusiness labour, they remain marginalized in enterprise ownership, leadership, and strategic decision-making, which reinforces gender inequality within the sector.

Gender Dynamics in Agribusiness Management

1. Gender Roles and Division of Labour

Gender dynamics in agribusiness management reflect socially constructed roles that assign different responsibilities to men and women. Women are primarily involved in labour-intensive activities such as planting, weeding, harvesting, processing, and local marketing, while men dominate capital-intensive activities, commercial production, and enterprise management. Edeoghon et al. (2019) found that female farmers participated more actively in rice production chains in Ebonyi State, especially in activities such as weeding, threshing, winnowing, cleaning, parboiling, and dehusking. However, men retained control over strategic decisions relating to production scale, pricing, marketing channels, and investment.

2. Gender and Leadership in Agribusiness Enterprises

Leadership within agribusiness enterprises remains largely male-dominated. Chete (2018) reported that production, processing, and marketing enterprises were significantly influenced by gender, with men more likely to control large-scale operations and business decisions. Women were mainly confined to smaller enterprises with lower capital and profit margins. Similarly, Coker et al. (2017) found that gender imbalances in socio-economic status, income, and resource use limited women's competitiveness and productivity in rice agribusiness. These imbalances constrained women's ability to expand operations, access profitable markets, and assume leadership roles.

Feminization of Labour and Masculinization of Management

Gender dynamics in agribusiness are characterized by feminization of labour and masculinization of management. Women supply a large share of labour across value chains, yet men dominate leadership, capital ownership, and enterprise control. This dynamic reinforces structural inequality and prevents women from benefiting equitably from agribusiness growth and commercialization.

Access to Productive Resources and Opportunities

1. Access to Land and Property Rights

Land is the most critical productive asset in agribusiness, yet women's access to land in Nigeria remains severely constrained. Customary inheritance systems and patriarchal norms limit women's land ownership and control. Ankrah et al. (2020) showed that access to land and extension services among maize farmers remained strongly gendered and shaped by socio-cultural norms. Similarly, Yisa et al. (2020) found that female cassava farmers were less technically efficient partly due to limited land ownership and insecure tenure arrangements. However, institutional interventions have shown positive outcomes. Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2023) found that CSR programmes implemented through the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) significantly improved women's land rights in the Niger Delta via joint titling, land leasing, and land certification schemes.

2. Access to Finance and Financial Services

Financial inclusion remains one of the most critical barriers to gender equity in agribusiness. Adegbite and Machethe (2020) reported a financial inclusion gender gap of 12 percent among smallholder farmers in Nigeria, with women having lower access to formal credit, savings, and insurance services. This exclusion translated into lower productivity, income inequality, limited market access, and food insecurity. Uduji et al. (2025) further demonstrated that women's participation in aquaculture increased when they had access to finance, training, extension services, and production inputs such as fingerlings and fish feed.

3. Access to Education, Training, and Extension Services

Education, training, and extension services are critical for enhancing productivity, innovation, and managerial capacity in agribusiness. However, women

often face restricted access to these services due to low literacy levels, cultural barriers, time constraints arising from domestic responsibilities, and weak institutional outreach. As a result, women are less exposed to modern farming techniques, improved technologies, and business management skills compared to men. Yisa et al. (2020) found that educational level and extension contact significantly influenced farmers' technical efficiency, with women being more disadvantaged because of limited access to training and advisory services. This restricted access reduces women's ability to adopt improved practices, scale up agribusiness operations, and compete effectively in commercial markets.

Constraints to Gender Equity in Agribusiness

1. ***Socio-Cultural Constraints:*** Socio-cultural norms remain one of the most persistent barriers to gender equity in agribusiness. Jamri (2020) identified patriarchal values, religious norms, and traditional belief systems as major constraints to women's participation in agripreneurship in North-Eastern Nigeria. These norms restrict women's land ownership rights, limit their access to entrepreneurial networks, and discourage their participation in leadership roles. As a result, women are often confined to low-status and informal agribusiness activities, despite their strong productive potential. Aniche (2025) similarly found that ancestral loyalties and traditional leadership structures inhibited women's inclusion in agribusiness decision-making and leadership in rural Akwa Ibom State. These cultural systems reinforce male dominance in community governance and economic institutions, thereby marginalizing women from strategic positions that influence resource allocation and enterprise development.
2. ***Institutional and Policy Constraints:*** Institutional arrangements often fail to adequately address women's specific needs within agribusiness systems. Many agricultural policies and programmes are gender-neutral in design but gender-biased in outcomes, as they do not account for women's structural disadvantages. Nnadi et al. (2021) showed that government COVID-19 response strategies increased gender inequality because they were not gender-sensitive and provided limited support for women farmers. In addition, migration patterns increased women's caregiving burdens, thereby reducing the time and energy available for productive agribusiness engagement. These institutional gaps limit women's access to support services and weaken their participation in agribusiness development initiatives.
3. ***Economic and Structural Constraints:*** Economic and structural barriers significantly constrain women's participation in agribusiness. These include limited access to credit, high cost of farm inputs, poor rural infrastructure, weak market linkages, and inadequate extension services. Yisa et al. (2020) reported that high cost of acquiring credit, poor road networks, limited farmland, and inadequate extension services were major constraints faced by female cassava farmers. These challenges reduce women's capacity to invest in improved technologies, access

profitable markets, and expand their enterprises. Consequently, women remain trapped in low-productivity and low-income agribusiness activities.

4. ***Climate and Environmental Constraints:*** Climate and environmental factors further exacerbate gender inequality in agribusiness. Bryan et al. (2024) emphasized that climate change interventions that ignore gender differences risk increasing women's labour burden, time poverty, and economic vulnerability. Women are often more exposed to climate shocks due to their reliance on rain-fed agriculture and limited access to adaptive resources such as irrigation, insurance, and climate information services. As a result, climate-related risks disproportionately affect women's agribusiness activities, thereby deepening existing gender inequalities and undermining the sustainability of women-led enterprises.

Implications of Gender Inequality for Agribusiness Performance

1. Effects on Productivity and Technical Efficiency

Gender inequality has profound implications for productivity and technical efficiency within agribusiness systems. Productivity in agribusiness depends largely on access to key productive resources such as land, capital, technology, information, and human capital. When women are systematically excluded or disadvantaged in accessing these resources, their capacity to operate at optimal efficiency is significantly reduced. This inefficiency does not only affect women individually but also undermines aggregate sector performance.

Yisa et al. (2020) provided empirical evidence that male cassava farmers were more technically efficient than female farmers, with mean efficiency scores of 0.82 and 0.78 respectively. Importantly, the study attributed this difference not to differences in skills or motivation but to structural inequalities in access to land, education, extension services, and credit. This implies that gender inequality generates allocative inefficiency within agribusiness systems, as productive potential is constrained by institutional barriers rather than economic capability.

Similarly, Coker et al. (2017) demonstrated that gender imbalances in socio-economic status and resource use limited productivity and competitiveness in rice agribusiness. Women's restricted access to productive inputs meant that their output levels remained suboptimal, thereby reducing overall sector productivity. From a development perspective, this represents a loss of economic potential, as closing gender gaps could significantly raise agricultural output and efficiency.

2. Impacts on Income, Profitability, and Enterprise Growth

Gender inequality also translates directly into income disparities, reduced profitability, and limited enterprise growth. Women tend to operate smaller agribusiness enterprises with lower capital investment, reduced access to profitable markets, and limited bargaining power. This constrains their ability to accumulate wealth, reinvest profits, and scale up operations. Chete (2018) found that larger farm sizes and higher sales volumes were mostly associated with male respondents, while women remained concentrated in small-scale enterprises

characterized by low capital intensity and limited commercial orientation. This structural imbalance reinforces income inequality and limits women's long-term economic mobility within agribusiness.

Adeosun and Owolabi (2021) further showed that gender income inequality in Nigeria was more pronounced across regions and sectors, with women especially married women earning significantly less than men. These income gaps reduce women's financial autonomy and constrain their ability to invest in improved technologies, business expansion, and risk management strategies. Consequently, gender inequality restricts enterprise growth and perpetuates a cycle of low productivity and poverty among women agripreneurs.

3. Implications for Food Security and Value Chain Development

Gender inequality has broader implications for food security and agricultural value chain development. Women play critical roles in food production, processing, storage, and household food management. When women are marginalized from decision-making and deprived of productive resources, food systems become less efficient, less resilient, and more vulnerable to shocks. Addo et al. (2024) emphasized that women are central actors in food systems and contribute significantly to food security, nutrition, and household welfare across West Africa. Limiting women's productive capacity therefore weakens the entire food system, undermining national efforts to achieve food sufficiency and nutritional security. Bryan *et al.* (2024) further argued that gender-blind climate interventions may exacerbate food insecurity by increasing women's labour burden, reducing their income control, and limiting adaptive capacity. This suggests that gender inequality not only constrains agribusiness performance but also threatens the sustainability and resilience of food systems under climate stress.

Strategies for Promoting Gender Equity in Agribusiness

1. ***Financial Inclusion and Gender-Responsive Finance:*** Financial inclusion remains one of the most powerful tools for promoting gender equity in agribusiness. Access to credit, savings, insurance, and digital financial services enables women to invest in inputs, adopt new technologies, expand enterprises, and manage risks. Without financial access, women remain trapped in subsistence-level agribusiness activities. Adegbite and Machethe (2020) argued that digital financial inclusion and gender-responsive agricultural finance innovations are critical strategies for bridging the financial inclusion gender gap in Nigeria. These include mobile banking platforms, microcredit schemes, cooperative financing models, and women-targeted loan products. Sundarasen et al. (2023) further emphasized that financial literacy is a foundational element of women's economic empowerment. Financial education enhances women's ability to manage resources, plan investments, assess risks, and sustain enterprises over time. Thus, financial inclusion must be accompanied by capacity building to achieve meaningful empowerment.

2. ***Capacity Building and Skills Development:*** Capacity building is essential for strengthening women's participation in agribusiness management. Training programmes in entrepreneurship, leadership, business planning, financial management, and technology adoption enhance women's managerial competence and confidence. Jamri (2020) recommended intensive agripreneurship training for women in North-Eastern Nigeria as a means of strengthening entrepreneurial skills, expanding business networks, and enhancing leadership capacity. Similarly, Nnadi et al. (2021) advocated gender-specific training programmes that address women's needs in accessing finance, information, and agricultural innovations. Such interventions enable women to transition from informal and subsistence agribusiness activities into formal, growth-oriented enterprises capable of generating sustainable income and employment.

3. ***Institutional and Corporate Interventions:*** Institutional interventions, particularly through corporate social responsibility (CSR), have emerged as effective mechanisms for promoting gender equity. CSR programmes can provide women with access to land, finance, training, extension services, and market linkages. Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2024) demonstrated that CSR interventions implemented through the GMoU significantly enhanced women's integration into agricultural value chains in the Niger Delta. Uduji et al. (2025) further showed that CSR programmes improved women's participation in aquaculture by providing finance, technical training, and production inputs. These findings highlight the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships involving government, private sector, NGOs, and community institutions in promoting inclusive agribusiness development.

Case Studies and Empirical Evidence from Nigeria

This section synthesizes key empirical studies conducted in Nigeria to illustrate how gender equity (or the lack thereof) manifests across agribusiness systems, value chains, and institutional interventions. These case studies provide concrete evidence on the structural nature of gender inequality and the potential pathways for transformation.

1. ***CSR and Gender-Equitable Value Chains in the Niger Delta:*** One of the most prominent empirical contributions is the study by Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2024), which examined corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives of multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta region. Using a quasi-experimental design involving 760 rural women, the study found that CSR interventions implemented through the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) significantly promoted gender-equitable agricultural value chains. Women in treatment communities recorded higher levels of participation in agricultural production, processing, and marketing compared to those in control communities. The study further demonstrated that institutional mechanisms such as community development committees, capacity-building programmes, and access to productive resources enhanced women's integration into agribusiness. This case shows that private sector institutions can

play a strategic role in reducing gender inequality when CSR is designed within a gender-responsive framework.

2. ***CSR and Women's Participation in Aquaculture Value Chains:*** Closely related is the study by Uduji et al. (2025), which focused on the impact of CSR on mainstreaming gender in aquaculture value chains in the Niger Delta. Based on a sample of 800 women, the study found that CSR interventions recorded modest but statistically significant success in improving women's participation in aquaculture enterprises. The results showed that women who had access to finance, training on pond management, extension services, and production inputs such as fingerlings and fish feed were more likely to engage in aquaculture. This case highlights that gender equity in agribusiness requires not only inclusion but also access to specialized technical knowledge and productive assets.

3. ***Land Rights and Women's Agribusiness Empowerment:*** Another important empirical case is provided by Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2023), which examined how CSR initiatives enhanced women's land rights in the Niger Delta. The study, involving 1,200 rural women, found that CSR interventions significantly improved women's access to land through joint titling, land leasing, land use certification, and community land delimitation. Secure land rights enabled women to invest more confidently in agribusiness activities, access credit, and adopt improved production technologies. This case illustrates that land tenure reform is a foundational requirement for gender equity in agribusiness management.

4. Gender Differentials in Technical Efficiency: Cassava Value Chain

Yisa et al. (2020) provided a detailed empirical case from Abia State, examining gender differentials in technical efficiency among cassava farmers. Using stochastic frontier analysis on 280 farmers, the study found that male farmers were more technically efficient than female farmers, primarily due to better access to land, extension services, cooperative membership, and credit. Female farmers were constrained by insecure land tenure, limited access to financial services, and inadequate extension contact. This case confirms that gender gaps in agribusiness performance are driven by structural inequalities rather than differences in competence or effort.

5. ***Gender Participation in Rice Value Chains:*** Edeoghon et al. (2019) examined gender participation in rice production in Ebonyi State and found that female farmers dominated most labour-intensive activities such as weeding, threshing, parboiling, cleaning, and dehusking. However, men controlled strategic decisions related to commercialization, pricing, and market access. Similarly, Chete (2018) assessed rice enterprises in southwestern Nigeria and found that enterprise ownership, large-scale production, and high sales volumes were mostly associated with male farmers. Women were more concentrated in small-scale operations with limited profit margins. These cases demonstrate a consistent pattern of feminization of labour and masculinization of management within Nigerian agribusiness systems.

6. ***Gender Inequality and Productivity in Rice Agribusiness:*** Coker et al. (2017) further provided empirical evidence from Kogi State, showing that gender imbalances in socio-economic status, income, and resource use constrained productivity and competitiveness in rice agribusiness. Although women expressed willingness to invest in agribusiness, they lacked access to finance, land, and markets, limiting their enterprise growth. This case confirms that motivation alone is insufficient to close gender gaps without institutional and economic support.

7. ***Gender Mainstreaming and Agripreneurship in North-Eastern Nigeria:*** Jamri (2020) examined gender mainstreaming in agripreneurship in North-Eastern Nigeria and found that gender-responsive interventions significantly improved women's participation in agricultural entrepreneurship. However, cultural norms, weak institutional support, and limited access to finance remained major barriers. The study recommended soft loans, agripreneurship training, and cultural reorientation as key strategies for empowering women agripreneurs.

8. ***Leadership and Women's Empowerment in Rural Agribusiness:*** Aniche (2025) provided qualitative evidence from Akwa Ibom State, showing that leadership development interventions enhanced women's participation in agribusiness decision-making and community governance. The study identified key themes such as ancestral loyalties, leadership inhibitors, and catalysts for change. This case demonstrates that gender equity in agribusiness is not only an economic issue but also a leadership and institutional governance challenge.

Synthesis of the Case Studies

Collectively, these Nigerian case studies reveal four consistent empirical patterns:

a) Women dominate labour but not leadership in agribusiness.
b) Gender gaps in productivity arise from unequal access to resources, not ability.
c) Land rights and financial inclusion are foundational for women's empowerment.
d) Institutional interventions (CSR, training, policy reforms) can significantly reduce gender inequality.

These findings provide strong empirical justification for gender-responsive agribusiness policies and institutional reforms in Nigeria.

Policy Implications and Practical Recommendations

1. ***Gender-Responsive Agribusiness Policies:*** There is a strong need for gender-responsive agribusiness policies that deliberately integrate women into financial systems, land tenure reforms, extension services, and enterprise development programmes. Gender considerations should be mainstreamed into national agricultural policies, planning processes, budgets, and monitoring frameworks to ensure that women's specific needs and constraints are addressed. Such policies should prioritize women's access to credit, training, technology, and markets, while also promoting their participation in leadership and decision-making structures. Without explicit gender targeting, agricultural policies risk reinforcing existing inequalities and excluding women from the benefits of agribusiness growth.

2. ***Strengthening Institutional Support Systems:*** Institutional support systems play a crucial role in promoting gender equity in agribusiness. Government agencies should collaborate with private sector actors, non-governmental organizations, and development partners to implement inclusive agribusiness programmes that target women's empowerment. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) frameworks such as the GMoU model have demonstrated strong potential for improving women's access to resources, training, and value chain participation. These models should be expanded beyond oil-producing regions and adapted to other agribusiness contexts to enhance women's integration into commercial agricultural systems and entrepreneurial networks.

3. ***Legal and Land Tenure Reforms:*** Legal and land tenure reforms are fundamental to achieving gender equity in agribusiness. Discriminatory inheritance systems and customary land practices continue to limit women's access to land and productive assets. Legal reforms should therefore strengthen women's land ownership rights and promote joint land titling, land leasing, and land certification schemes. Secure land tenure enables women to access credit, invest in agribusiness enterprises, adopt improved technologies, and engage in long-term business planning. Without secure land rights, women remain economically vulnerable and excluded from high-value agribusiness opportunities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, achieving gender equity in agribusiness management in Nigeria requires a structural transformation of economic, institutional, and socio-cultural systems that currently marginalize women. Gender equity should be viewed not as a peripheral development issue but as a core pillar of inclusive economic growth, agribusiness sustainability, and national food security. Future research should prioritize longitudinal and intersectional studies, evaluate the long-term impacts of gender-focused interventions, and explore gender-transformative approaches to climate-smart agribusiness. Such research will provide stronger evidence for designing policies and programmes that not only include women but also empower them as leaders, entrepreneurs, and key drivers of agribusiness development in Nigeria.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

GENDER ISSUES AND LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Educational leadership in Nigeria operates within a socio-cultural context that has historically reinforced male dominance in positions of authority. Deep-rooted patriarchial values, gendered role expectations, and traditional power structures continue to shape leadership selection and progression across educational institutions, from basic education to higher education (Acker, 2012; Morley, 2013). As a result, gender remains a significant determinant of access to influential leadership positions, often privileging men while constraining women's advancement (Okoro, 2025).

Although women's participation in education as teachers, administrators, and academics has increased substantially over the years, this numerical growth has not translated into proportional representation in senior leadership roles such as principals, provosts, rectors, and vice-chancellors (Aina, 2014; Odejide, 2016). Studies within the Nigerian context reveal that women are more frequently concentrated in supportive or middle-management roles, while decision-making positions with greater authority and visibility remain overwhelmingly occupied by men (Ogbogu, 2013; Taiwo, 2025). This persistent imbalance reflects not a lack of competence or aspiration among women, but structural and cultural barriers embedded within educational governance systems.

Gender disparities in educational leadership have far-reaching implications for institutional effectiveness, equity, and sustainable development. Inclusive leadership has been shown to enhance organizational performance, promote diverse perspectives in decision-making, and foster equitable learning environments (Eagly & Carli, 2007; UNESCO, 2019). In Nigeria, however, the under-representation of women in leadership limits the transformative potential of educational institutions and undermines national and global commitments to gender equality, including Sustainable Development Goal 5.

Against this backdrop, this chapter examines the nature and extent of gender disparities in educational leadership in Nigeria, explores the socio-cultural, institutional, and systemic challenges confronting women's leadership advancement,

and analyses the implications of these disparities for educational development and policy reform. By foregrounding both global perspectives and local empirical evidence, the chapter contributes to ongoing scholarly and policy debates on gender-responsive leadership in Nigerian education.

Gender and Educational Leadership

Educational leadership broadly involves the capacity to guide, influence, and coordinate human and material resources toward the achievement of institutional goals. When examined through a gender lens, leadership in education must be understood within wider socio-cultural and structural contexts that shape access to authority and decision-making. In Nigeria, educational leadership has historically been characterized by male dominance, largely due to entrenched patriarchal norms that associate leadership competence, authority, and rational decision-making with men (Reis & Hope, 2024).

Although, recent decades have witnessed gradual improvements in women's participation in educational administration, gender parity remains far from achieved. Female representation in senior leadership positions continues to be constrained by cultural expectations, institutional practices, and persistent stereotypes that frame leadership as a masculine domain (Aina, 2012; Morley, 2013). Understanding gender and educational leadership therefore requires a framework that integrates leadership theory with socio-cultural realities, policy environments, and power relations within Nigerian educational institutions.

Barriers to Female Leadership in Nigerian Educational Institutions

Empirical studies consistently show that women in Nigerian educational institutions encounter multiple, interconnected barriers that hinder their progression into leadership roles. These barriers operate at socio-cultural, institutional, and individual levels. Socio-cultural norms rooted in patriarchy often prioritise men for leadership positions while positioning women as supporters rather than decision-makers (Adebayo et al., 2025; Akinwale, 2018). Such norms are reinforced through gender socialisation processes that assign women primary domestic responsibilities, thereby limiting the time, flexibility, and institutional visibility required for leadership advancement.

Institutional constraints further compound these challenges. Many educational organisations lack clear gender-responsive policies, mentoring structures, and transparent promotion criteria, which disproportionately disadvantages female academics and administrators (Okoro, 2025; Ogbogu, 2013). In some cases, informal networks and gatekeeping practices often dominated by men shape leadership selection processes, making it difficult for qualified women to access strategic positions. Collectively, these factors sustain gender inequalities in educational leadership despite increased female participation in the education sector overall.

Gender, Leadership Styles, and Institutional Development

Despite structural barriers, research suggests that women's participation in educational leadership contributes positively to institutional effectiveness and development. Studies on leadership styles indicate that female leaders often adopt more participatory, collaborative, and relationship-oriented approaches, which foster inclusiveness, staff motivation, and shared ownership of institutional goals (Florence & Okenwa, 2015; Oplatka & Arar, 2016). In Nigerian tertiary institutions, such leadership attributes have been associated with improved organizational climate, enhanced communication, and more responsive decision-making processes.

Comparative studies of male and female leadership in Nigerian secondary schools reveal variations in leadership practices, although these differences are not always statistically significant (Reis & Hope, 2024). Nonetheless, the presence of women in leadership roles has been linked to more inclusive governance structures, greater attention to welfare issues, and increased sensitivity to gender equity concerns. This suggests that advancing gender balance in educational leadership is not merely a matter of representation but a strategic approach to strengthening institutional development and democratic leadership practices within the education system.

Leadership Roles in Educational Institutions: The Nigerian Experience

Case studies from Nigeria provide important insights into how gender shapes leadership experiences and outcomes within educational institutions. Existing empirical evidence demonstrates that although women increasingly participate in school leadership, their representation and influence remain constrained by structural, cultural, and institutional factors. Examining Nigerian contexts is particularly important because leadership practices are deeply embedded within socio-cultural norms that influence access to authority, decision-making, and professional advancement (Akinwale & George, 2020; Morley, 2013).

Female Leadership in Secondary Schools

Empirical studies conducted in Anambra State revealed that both male and female principals significantly contribute to school effectiveness and development. However, subtle variations exist in leadership styles and administrative approaches, often shaped by gendered expectations and social roles. While male principals tend to adopt more hierarchical leadership strategies, female principals are more inclined toward participatory and collaborative practices, which positively influence staff morale and school climate (Obiekwe et al., 2021).

An empirical investigation conducted by Anho et al. (2022) explored the relationship between gender and human resource management practices among secondary school principals in Delta State. Drawing on survey data from a large sample of 934 male and female principals, the study revealed no statistically significant gender differences in fundamental administrative responsibilities such as

planning, supervision, and decision-making. This finding suggests that effectiveness in core leadership functions is not determined by gender, as both male and female principals demonstrate comparable administrative competence. However, the study also found that gender played a role in specific human resource domains, particularly recruitment processes and interpersonal relations. These differences indicate that while overall leadership effectiveness is similar, male and female principals may adopt distinct approaches or priorities in managing human resources, shaped by socialization patterns and leadership orientations. The findings, by implications, provided strong empirical support for the leadership capacity of female principals in Delta State, affirming that women are equally effective as men in essential human resource leadership functions. This evidence challenges gender-based stereotypes in school administration and supports equitable leadership appointments.

Similarly et al (2020) examined gender variations in the practice of transformative leadership among secondary school principals in Ika Land, Delta State. Using stratified random sampling that included principals, teachers, and students, the study found that leadership practices differed along gender lines, particularly in areas related to staff inclusion, participatory decision-making, and curriculum support. Although, the study did not focus on direct performance outcomes, it demonstrated that gender significantly influenced how transformative leadership was enacted within schools. These variations highlighted the contextual ways in which female principals may shape administrative processes, foster inclusive school environments, and support instructional improvement. These imply that gender influences leadership style and practice in Delta State secondary schools, with potential consequences for school climate, staff engagement, and instructional effectiveness. Recognising these gendered leadership dynamics is essential for leadership development programmes and policy interventions aimed at improving school outcomes.

A context-specific study by Nwadiokwu and Moemeke (2020) examined gender-based differences in the practice of transformational leadership among secondary school principals in Ika Land, Delta State. Adopting a stratified random sampling technique that involved principals, teachers, and students, the study found that leadership practices were not gender-neutral. Instead, gender significantly shaped how transformational leadership was enacted, particularly in areas such as staff participation, collaborative decision-making, and curriculum support. While the study did not explicitly compare male and female principals in terms of measurable performance outcomes, the observed variations in leadership approaches provide important empirical evidence that female principals exercise distinctive leadership practices capable of shaping school administration and organizational culture within the Delta State context. These imply that gender plays a meaningful role in shaping leadership styles in Delta State secondary schools, with potential consequences for school climate, staff morale, and institutional effectiveness.

Beyond Delta State, studies conducted across other states of Nigeria offer valuable comparative insights into the relationship between gender and school leadership. Research from states such as Anambra, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River consistently indicate that female principals are more likely to adopt democratic and transformational leadership styles (Akanwa & Ukpai, 2019; Ekpoh, 2018). These approaches are frequently associated with positive school climates, improved teacher motivation, and, in some cases, better student academic outcomes. Students and teachers often report more favourable perceptions of female principals in areas related to communication, interpersonal relations, and motivational leadership practices. Specifically, studies in Akwa Ibom State secondary schools revealed that female principals scored marginally higher than their male counterparts on indicators of administrative effectiveness, suggesting that gender-based differences in leadership practice may translate into observable leadership outcomes (Ekpoh, 2018).

Across studies conducted in Delta State and other parts of Nigeria, several consistent trends emerge which indicate that:

- ***Leadership effectiveness is not determined by gender alone:*** Female principals are generally found to be as effective as male principals in core administrative and instructional leadership functions. For instance, studies in Delta State report no significant gender differences in several human resource management responsibilities (Nwadiokwu & Moemeke, 2020).
- ***Gender influences leadership orientation and emphasis:*** Female school leaders tend to emphasize inclusive, participatory, and transformational leadership behaviours, which existing research linked to higher levels of teacher commitment, collaboration, and student engagement (Ekpoh, 2018; Northouse, 2022).
- ***Differences appear in specific administrative domains:*** Certain leadership tasks such as staff recruitment, conflict management, and interpersonal relations show gender-based variation in emphasis, suggesting that male and female principals may demonstrate complementary leadership strengths rather than hierarchical differences in competence (Northouse, 2022).

Collectively, these findings challenge deficit-based assumptions about female leadership in Nigerian secondary schools and instead underscore the importance of recognizing gender as a contextual factor that shapes leadership practice, not leadership capacity. This evidence supports the need for gender-responsive leadership development programmes that leverage diverse leadership styles to improve school effectiveness and educational outcomes.

Gender and Staff Engagement

Research in Nigerian Colleges of Education (CoEs) indicates that the persistent underrepresentation of women in senior management positions affects institutional culture and staff engagement. Okpara et al. (2025) found that institutions with limited female leadership representation often experience reduced

inclusivity in decision-making processes, which can weaken staff commitment and innovation. Increasing women's presence in leadership has been associated with more inclusive governance and improved organizational cohesion.

Challenges Facing Female Teachers

Narrative and qualitative studies focusing on public secondary schools highlight the systemic barriers faced by female teachers aspiring to leadership roles. These challenges include gender stereotyping, work–family role conflicts, limited access to leadership training, and weak mentorship structures. Such obstacles not only slow women's career progression but also reinforce male dominance in educational leadership (UNIZIK Journal of Educational Research, 2024; Alabi & Oyetunji, 2019).

Implications for Policy and Practice

The persistent underrepresentation of women in educational leadership positions poses serious challenges to equity, effective governance, and the overall quality of education in Nigeria. Gender imbalance in leadership limits the range of perspectives informing policy decisions, weakens institutional sensitivity to the needs of diverse stakeholders, and undermines inclusive decision-making processes. Evidence suggests that leadership diversity contributes to more balanced policy outcomes, improved organizational effectiveness, and stronger accountability frameworks within educational institutions (Adeleke & Bamiro, 2022; Morley, 2013).

Addressing these structural disparities requires deliberate and sustained policy action. Educational policies should institutionalise structured mentorship and sponsorship programmes that support women's leadership development, particularly at transitional career stages. In addition, gender-responsive leadership training should be mainstreamed into professional development frameworks to equip both male and female educators with the skills needed to challenge entrenched gender norms. Transparent and merit-based promotion procedures are also critical for reducing implicit bias and ensuring fairness in leadership appointments. Furthermore, affirmative action measures, when carefully designed and monitored, can serve as corrective mechanisms to accelerate women's access to leadership roles and promote gender equity in educational governance (Adeleke & Bamiro, 2022; Taiwo, 2025; UNESCO, 2019).

Conclusion

Despite measurable advances in women's participation in educational leadership in Nigeria, gender disparities remain deeply embedded within the system. These inequalities are sustained by persistent socio-cultural expectations, structural barriers within educational institutions, and limited access to leadership development opportunities for women. Effectively addressing these challenges demands a comprehensive and sustained approach that goes beyond policy

declarations to include cultural reorientation, institutional reforms, mentorship structures, and deliberate capacity-building initiatives for aspiring female leaders.

Advancing gender equity in educational leadership is therefore, not merely an issue of fairness or representation; it is a strategic imperative for improving governance quality, fostering inclusive decision-making, and strengthening educational outcomes. Evidence suggests that diverse leadership enhances organizational effectiveness, accountability, and innovation within educational systems. Consequently, prioritising gender-responsive leadership development will contribute significantly to the long-term sustainability and developmental relevance of Nigeria's education sector, aligning national educational goals with global commitments to equity and inclusive development.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

GENDER EQUITY IN AGRICULTURE: A PATH TO FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Gender equity is closely linked with food security and poverty eradication in sustainable agriculture crucial for enhancing productivity, ensuring food security, and driving rural development. Providing women with equal access to land, technology, funds, resources and training can increase agricultural productivity by 30 %. Based on the fact that women are custodians of traditional knowledge and environmental stewards with great potential, they are essential to building climate-resilient food. Agriculture feeds the world, sustain and promote the economy especially the rural economy, sadly, in Nigeria, 20 percent of the workforce is engaged in the agriculture sector, and the sector is characterized by low level of female participation, women are not seen at the frontline of agricultural practices but rather they are disadvantaged and marginalised especially in field work. Their contribution are undermined, devalued, constrained and given less attention and support. This chapter addresses the need to have gender equity in the agricultural sector as a pathway to food security and poverty eradication considering the advantages it has and equally projects.

Agriculture

Agriculture can simply be explained as the cultivation of crops, rearing of animals for man's consumption. Agriculture has different aspects ranging from crop science, soil science, fisheries and aquaculture, horticulture, animal rearing, agricultural engineering, food processing and preservation. It is a backbone of a country's economy by ensuring food security. According to World Bank Group (2025), agriculture has numerous advantages which includes: food provision and security for 80 % populace, income generation, job creation, production of raw materials. Aside the above, agriculture also serve as means of foreign exchange, source of manure, as well as material for shelter and clothing. Agriculture has basically two types, subsistence and commercial agriculture, whilst subsistence is done on a small scale to cater for the farmer and the family, commercial agriculture is carried out on a larger scale to cater for the family and make money from sales. It has different

branches- soil science, crop science, fisheries, horticulture, agricultural extension and economics, forestry, animal science, pomology, agricultural engineering etc.

Gender equity

This is a term that refers to fairness on all genders, recognising that everyone gets the same thing, giving equal chance to thrive, giving everyone access to resources (Sanusi & Ibrahim, 2023). It creates fair outcome and not just equal treatment. Gender equity helps to eliminate or reduce to the barest minimum bias and discrimination, it helps to improve the economic growth and social structure of the country thereby creating a balance so that no one is held behind or constrained in certain areas. Gender equity is an approach in the distribution of resources such that it is fair to both men and women. It is done in such a way that existing gap is closed. For example, if in the past, women were discriminated against in terms of access to education, the principle of equity demands that they should have a fair share to bridge that gender gap, this is also applicable to agriculture sector. The principle of equity may manifest in forms of access to land for agricultural purpose for both men and women, free education for men and women, establishment of women and men schools, scholarship for either boys or girls, access to grant for both men and women among others. All these are done to bridge gender gap that exist between male and female in the society.

Gender equity in Agriculture

Gender equity is a serious challenge in Agriculture in Nigeria affecting the country's economic growth and food security. Women in agriculture are pivotal to Nigeria's economy as they contribute actively and significantly to food security, job creation, and poverty alleviation in the country. Yet, they are faced with challenges centred on disrupted supply chains, cost of operation, and limited access to finance and resources. Sahel Consulting (2024) reported the urgent need of investing in the capacities of frontline workers, developing beneficial policies, and implementing gender-inclusive strategies channelled directly to Africa. Globally, women account for about 43% of the agricultural labour force, yet, their contributions are often undermined (Usha & Rajeshkumar, 2025). There is need for stronger gender-responsive agriculture policies, particularly in light of climate change, which disproportionately affects women farmers. Women are the backbone of rural economies hence, we can unlock significant economic and social benefits for an entire community and beyond if there is successful intervention and support. There are disparities, where many women in small scale agriculture are not aware of any existing policy, coupled with systemic inefficiencies, hindering their contributions to rural development, food security, and agricultural productivity, ultimately undermining Nigeria's potential for sustainable agricultural growth (FAO, 2023). There are also no proactive measures by the government and relevant stakeholders to address these challenges. Gender equity in agriculture refers to fairness in the treatment of men and women involved in farm practices or

agriculture. Gender inequity is a barrier to food availability, economic stability, sustainable agricultural practices and social injustice, it is therefore important to achieve gender equity to make the system work and also make it fair for all to be involved actively at all areas of the sector. Gender equity should provide the necessary support to overcome barriers in other to achieve results in sustainable agricultural development (Anderson et al., 2021). Women are mostly seen in processing and preservation of farm product whereas they can also perform in the field, this is so because women are seen as the weaker vessel hence the men do the field work naturally restricting the women. A study carried out by Mohammed (2012), revealed that the involvement of women in agriculture is 32 % while that of men is 68 %, and suggested that to reduce food unavailability and increase the participation of gender in agriculture, there is the need for advocacy for equitable integration of both men and women in agriculture. The second of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, says 'zero hunger' IFAD (2023). These goals cannot be met in Africa without fighting the challenges women face while contributing their quota towards food security in Africa through Agriculture. The following are some of the goals of SDG 2 (zero hunger) according to United Nations (2025):

1. By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.
2. By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.
3. By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.
4. By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.
5. By 2030, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

6. Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.
7. Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.

A study carried out by Usha and Rajeshkumar (2025) on rural women's participation in agri-entrepreneurial activities, revealed that agribusinesses run by women were not only viable but also profitable. Despite cultural and security challenges, the women showed resilience, and the study recommended inclusive programme designs to ensure women's participation from planning to implementation stages. In Nigeria, despite numerous women empowerment programs aimed at promoting sustainable development, poor implementation, lack of continuity, and socio-cultural barriers have undermined their success. Women continue to face limited access to resources, education, and decision-making roles in agriculture. In India also, women in agricultural sector and allied activities are challenged with low wages, lack of land rights, and minimal representation in farmer organizations, which exacerbate their economic vulnerability (Usha & Rajeshkumar, 2025).

Economic importance of gender equity in agriculture

According to Farrelly (2025), the following are the importance of gender equity in agriculture;

1. Gender equity has the potential to improve agricultural productivity and food security, thereby improving household nutrition and health.
2. It also creates an avenue for the country to benefit socially.
3. Gender equity helps to reduce poverty and hunger especially in rural areas
4. Investing in women in agriculture can boost economic development and the country overall gross domestic profit (GDP)
5. It can improve job creation
6. Implementing robust policies around sexual harassment. Promotion and employment can protect workers and provide safe work place, reducing unfair treatment.

Problems and possible solutions associated with gender equity in agriculture

1. Land- According to Lozana-corona (2023), women are faced with unavailability of land which is an asset. Most countries even Nigeria, prioritise their male kids when it comes to inheriting land and this is legal, leaving women without access to land. Addressing this fairly and making provision for women with secure land tenure can help improve availability of land which will further boost productivity, improve their decision making power, income etc.

2. Decision making power and active participation- Decision making, leadership and innovation is another challenge in promoting gender equity in agriculture. Women involvement in leadership and decision making, can help to curb gender inequality and boost productivity as well as income.
3. Credit and input- This is another challenge to gender equity in agriculture and it is a limiting factor. Provision of credit facility and input for women in agriculture will increase women's productivity, reduce work load, lure other women into the sector.
4. Education and training- Education and training are means to get prerequisite or full knowledge about something. This can help improve women's productivity and economic status in agriculture. Sadly, women in the rural areas do not have access to quality training and information because of social and cultural barriers among many other reasons. Creating an avenue for this training and proper education can equip women with the right information to increase their productivity, income and agricultural practices/skills.
5. Gender based violence- harassment, assault, over exploitation of time and body is a challenge faced by women in agriculture. Setting up policies that protects women is essential if the wellbeing of women is to be taken into consideration. This will give them a sense of belonging, promote a safe work place, and give them full participation in all activities.
6. Technological advancements and programmes- This can play a vital role in empowering women farmers. Some countries like India has integrated ICT tools into farming practices and this has enabled women to access vital agricultural information, boosting productivity and economic independence (Usha & Rajeshkumar, 2025).

Promoting gender equity in agriculture

1. Making provision for women to own land and also inherit land
2. Creating an access through which interested women can be educated and trained in agricultural areas of their interest
3. Improve access and availability to funds, grants, loans and essential technologies.
4. Providing support for women farmers group or union
5. Promoting gender equity and curbing gender based violence in agricultural sector

Conclusion

Gender equity for sustainable agriculture, entails unlocking and harnessing women's full potential of agricultural practices and its fairness on women. Exploiting the ability and capability of women will help sustain lives, therefore, the future of agriculture depends on gender equity. Recognising and providing the needed support for women farmers will boost productivity and uphold a resilient agricultural systems. Women's contribution to agriculture, empowering women in agriculture,

promoting gender equity, and increasing women's leadership and innovation in the sector are necessary for life sustenance and achieving sustainable development and food security. Empowering women in agriculture is not just the way to go but a smart move for more equitable, food-secure, and sustainable future. Addressing gender inequality in agricultural sector should be approached at local and international level, involving good and unbiased policymakers, private sector, civil society, and women themselves as this will eliminate poverty, and promote human rights advancement.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR GENDER EQUITY IN ECONOMICS EDUCATION: POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PROSPECTS

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Introduction

Gender equity has become a major focus in contemporary educational discourse because of its close relationship with social justice, inclusive development and sustainable economic growth, (UNESCO 2023). While education systems worldwide have recorded progress in expanding access for girls and women, notable gender disparities persist in participation, achievement, and leadership across many disciples. These challenges are particularly visible in economics education, a field that significantly influences economic reasoning, policy formulation, and national development planning, despite its strategic importance, economics education continues to be largely male-dominated, especially at advanced level of study, in academic staffing, and in leadership positions. (Meza-Meejia et al., 2023). Such imbalances are sustained by enduring social-cultural norms, institutional practices and structural barriers that limit women's opportunities and progression.

Educational leadership plays a critical role in addressing and reducing these inequalities, leaders within the education system including classroom teachers, heads of departments, institutional administrators, and policymakers possess the authority to influence policy formulation, allocate resources, shape curricula and transform institutional cultures. When leadership approaches are inclusive, they and gender- responsive, they can challenge discriminatory practices, promote fairness, and create supportive learning environments that enhance the participation and success of women and girls in economics education (Rarieya et al, 2025

Educational leadership

Educational leadership refers to the process through which individuals in positions of authority and influence guide, manage, and inspire educational institutions toward the achievement of set goals. It involves setting a clear vision, shaping organizational culture, formulating and implementing policies, and mobilizing human and material resources to improve teaching, learning, and institutional effectiveness. Educational leadership is also seen as the intentional actions of individuals in roles of influence to guide policy, shape organizational culture, and

improve learning environments. Effective leadership is not limited to formal positions but encompasses the capacity to influence policy and practice toward equitable outcomes (African Union Commission, 2016).

In contemporary education systems, leadership extends beyond formal administrative roles such as principals, heads of departments, deans, and policymakers. It also encompasses informal leadership exercised by teachers, curriculum specialists, and academic coordinators who influence decision-making and professional practice. Effective educational leadership is therefore collaborative, dynamic, and context-sensitive. Educational leaders play a critical role in fostering equity, inclusion, and quality within institutions. Through strategic planning and decision-making, leaders determine how curricula are designed, how resources are allocated, and how institutional values are translated into practice. Leadership approaches such as transformational, instructional, and social justice leadership emphasize motivation, shared responsibility, and fairness, making them particularly relevant in addressing issues of inequality in education. In the context of economics education, educational leadership is essential for shaping learning environments that are inclusive and responsive to diverse student needs. Leaders influence the adoption of gender-responsive curricula, equitable recruitment and promotion practices, and supportive academic cultures. By prioritizing inclusive leadership practices, educational leaders can challenge systemic barriers, promote equal opportunities, and enhance the relevance and effectiveness of economics education in contributing to national development and social

Gender Equity

Gender equality describes a process of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between genders, taking into account historical and structural disadvantages experienced by women and gender minorities. Unlike equality, which implies identical treatment, gender equity accommodates contextual differences to achieve equitable results.it i also refers to the fair and just treatment of all genders, taking into account existing inequalities and disadvantages so that everyone has opportunities, access, and outcomes. It aims to remove barriers caused by discrimination, stereotypes, or unequal power relations.

Economics Education

Economics Education involves teaching and learning economic concepts, analytical skills, and decision-making frameworks. As a discipline that shapes future policymakers and economic actors, equitable access and representation in economics education are crucial for inclusive economic development. Economics Education is the structured teaching of economic principles, concepts, and skills that enable learners to understand how individuals, businesses, and governments make choices in the presence of scarcity.

Gender Equity with economics education.

Gender equity and economics education are closely connected because economics as a discipline shape how learners understand resource allocation, opportunities, income distribution, and development. When gender equity is integrated into economics education, it ensures that both males and females have fair access, participation, and outcomes in learning and in future economic roles. Gender equity in economics education ensures that all genders have equal opportunities to enroll, participate, and progress in economics-related programmes. This is important because social cultural norms often discourage girls from studying economics especially at higher level. other areas include curriculum content, teaching and learning practices, assessment and outcomes, leadership and policy in Economics Education, social-economic Development implications among others.

Theoretical Perspectives on Leadership and Gender Equity:

Understanding the relationship between educational leadership and gender equity requires engagement with relevant theoretical perspectives that explain how leadership influences. institutional practices, power relations, and equitable outcomes. Several leadership and social theories provide a useful foundation for analyzing how educational leaders can promote gender equity within economics education.

1. ***Transformational Leadership Theory:*** Transformational leadership theory emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring, motivating, and empowering followers to achieve shared goals. Transformational leaders promote change by articulating a clear vision, encouraging collaboration, and fostering commitment to institutional values. In the context of gender equity, transformational leaders challenge discriminatory practices, support inclusive policies, and motivate stakeholders to embrace equity-driven reforms. This approach is particularly relevant in economics education, where leaders can influence attitudes toward female participation and leadership through mentorship, role modelling, and inclusive institutional cultures.

2. ***Social Justice Leadership Theory:*** Social justice leadership focuses on fairness, equity, and the dismantling of systemic inequalities within educational institutions. Leaders guided by this theory actively address issues such as marginalization, discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities. Social justice leadership emphasizes advocacy, ethical responsibility, and structural change. In promoting gender equity, educational leaders adopt policies and practices that address historical disadvantages faced by women, ensuring equitable access, representation, and participation in economics education.

3. ***Feminist Leadership Theory:*** Feminist leadership theory highlights power relations, gender norms, and the need to challenge patriarchal structures within organizations. It emphasizes collaboration, inclusivity, and shared leadership rather than hierarchical control. From this perspective, educational leaders seek to amplify women's voices, promote gender-sensitive decision-making, and create institutional environments that value diversity and care. Feminist leadership

provides a critical lens for understanding gender disparities in economics education and supports the development of leadership practices that empower women and reduce gender bias.

4. ***Gender-Transformative Leadership Theory:*** Gender-transformative leadership goes beyond addressing gender gaps to actively challenging and transforming harmful gender norms and power imbalances. This approach encourages leaders to question traditional assumptions about gender roles and to implement policies that restructure institutional systems in favour of equity. In economics education, gender-transformative leadership supports curriculum reform, leadership diversification, and institutional accountability mechanisms that lead to sustainable gender equity outcomes.

5. ***Human Capital Theory:*** Human capital theory views education as an investment that enhances individuals' skills, productivity, and economic outcomes. From this perspective, promoting gender equity in education maximizes the utilization of human resources by ensuring that women and men have equal opportunities to develop their potential. Educational leadership that supports gender equity contributes to national development by expanding the pool of skilled economists and policy experts, thereby strengthening economic decision-making and development planning.

Gender Disparities in Economics Education: Global and Local Contexts

Gender disparities in economics education remain a persistent challenge across both global and local contexts, despite overall progress in educational access and gender parity in general schooling. These disparities manifest in student enrolment, academic performance, career progression, and leadership representation within the discipline of economics.

Global Context

At the global level, economics education continues to display significant gender imbalances, particularly at higher levels of study and in academic and professional leadership roles. While female participation in education has improved worldwide, women remain underrepresented in undergraduate economics majors, postgraduate programmes, and academic faculty positions in many countries. Research consistently shows that fewer women choose economics compared to men, and those who do are more likely to exit the field at advanced stages.

Several factors contribute to this global trend. Economics is often perceived as a male-dominated, mathematically intensive discipline, which can discourage female students due to societal stereotypes and lower self-confidence in quantitative subjects. Teaching practices and curricula that lack gender perspectives or female role models further reinforce these perceptions. In addition, limited mentoring opportunities and gender bias in academic environments affect women's persistence and advancement in economics education globally.

The underrepresentation of women in economics education has broader implications, including reduced diversity of perspectives in economic research and policy analysis. This limits the discipline's ability to address gender-sensitive economic issues such as income inequality, labour market participation, and poverty reduction.

Local Context

In many developing countries, including Nigeria and other parts of Africa, gender disparities in economics education are shaped by additional socio-cultural, economic, and institutional factors. Cultural expectations regarding gender roles often prioritize domestic responsibilities for girls, limiting their educational choices and career aspirations. In some contexts, families may discourage girls from pursuing economics due to perceptions that it offers limited opportunities or is unsuitable for women.

At the institutional level, inadequate learning resources, lack of gender-responsive pedagogy, and limited female representation among economics teachers and academic leaders further widen gender gaps. Financial constraints, early marriage, and household responsibilities also affect female students' access to and retention in economics programmes.

Despite these challenges, some local contexts have recorded gradual improvements due to targeted policies, advocacy for girls' education, and increased awareness of gender equity issues. However, progress remains uneven, and gender disparities persist, especially in leadership positions within economics education departments and institutions.

Comparative Implications

The comparison of global and local contexts in the work of Laki and Badon (2024), reveals that while gender disparities in economics education are universal, their intensity and underlying causes vary across regions. Global challenges such as stereotypes and institutional bias intersect with local realities such as poverty, cultural norms, and policy implementation gaps. Addressing these disparities therefore requires context-sensitive strategies supported by strong educational leadership and gender-responsive policies.

Gender disparities in economics education reflect complex interactions between global trends and local conditions. Tackling these inequalities demands deliberate leadership interventions, inclusive policies, and sustained institutional commitment to ensure that economics education becomes accessible, equitable, and representative of diverse gender perspectives. Despite progress in overall educational access, gender disparities in economics education persist. A recent overview by Frontiers in Education (2025) shows that even where economics enrolment rises, girls remain significantly underrepresented relative to boys at higher levels of study. This imbalance is often rooted in cultural perceptions of economics as a male-oriented, numerically demanding field, discouraging girls from

pursuing it. Moreover, within institutions, women are underrepresented not only as students but also in faculty and leadership roles, limiting their influence over curriculum, institutional priorities, and policy decisions. Research highlights how these patterns undermine diverse perspectives, reduce academic innovation, and fail to harness the full potential of all learners.

The Role of Educational Leadership in Promoting Gender Equity

Educational leaders influence gender equity through vision setting, policy enforcement, and resource allocation. Leaders committed to inclusion can:

- Develop and communicate equity-focused strategic plans
- Ensure curriculum content reflects diverse perspectives
- Create monitoring systems for female students and potential leaders
- Promote transparent and equitable hiring, promotion, and leadership selection processes, such leadership not only supports equitable representation but also improve institutional performance and students' outcomes.

Policies Supporting Gender Equity

International frameworks like the UNESCO Education 2030 Agenda and national gender policies provide a foundation for gender equity in education. These policies emphasize inclusive access, equal participation, and leadership opportunities for women and girls. However, without strong leadership, policies may remain aspirational. Studies show that robust policy frameworks must be coupled with leadership that enforces implementation, monitors progress, and addresses systemic resistance. Institutional gaps often arise due to limited resources, weak accountability, and insufficient gender data systems.

Leadership Strategies for Enhancing Gender Equity in Economics Education

Educational leadership plays a critical role in promoting gender equity within economics education. Through deliberate policies, inclusive practices, and supportive institutional cultures, leaders can address systemic barriers and create opportunities for equitable participation and advancement. The following strategies highlight key leadership approaches for enhancing gender equity in economics education.

Development and Implementation of Gender-Responsive Policies

Educational leaders should formulate and enforce clear gender-responsive policies that promote fairness in access, participation, and advancement within economics education. These policies should address admissions, recruitment, promotion, and leadership selection processes while ensuring alignment with national and international gender equity frameworks.

Promotion of Inclusive Curriculum and Pedagogy

Leaders should encourage the integration of gender perspectives into economics curricula and teaching practices. This includes incorporating gender-

related economic issues, using diverse case studies, and adopting pedagogical approaches that accommodate different learning styles. Gender-responsive pedagogy helps create inclusive classrooms where all students feel valued and supported.

Mentorship and Capacity-Building Programmes

Establishing structured mentorship and professional development programmes is essential for supporting female students and educators in economics. Educational leaders can facilitate mentoring relationships, leadership training, and career development initiatives that enhance confidence, academic performance, and leadership readiness among women.

Equitable Recruitment, Retention, and Promotion Practices

Leaders should ensure transparency and fairness in recruitment, retention, and promotion processes. This includes minimizing bias through standardized evaluation criteria, encouraging female applications for academic and leadership positions, and supporting career progression through training and recognition.

Creation of Supportive and Inclusive Institutional Cultures

Educational leaders must foster institutional environments that value diversity, respect, and inclusion. By promoting open dialogue, addressing discrimination, and modelling inclusive leadership behaviours, leaders can cultivate cultures that support gender equity across economics education programmes.

Data-Driven Planning and Monitoring

The use of gender-disaggregated data is crucial for effective decision-making. Leaders should collect, analyze, and utilize data on enrolment, performance, staffing, and leadership representation to identify gaps, inform interventions, and monitor progress toward gender equity goals.

Collaboration and Strategic Partnerships

Educational leaders should build partnerships with government agencies, professional bodies, non-governmental organizations, and international institutions to support gender equity initiatives. Such collaborations provide access to resources, expertise, and best practices that strengthen institutional capacity.

Leadership Development and Sensitization

Continuous leadership training on gender equity and inclusive practices is essential. Educational leaders should participate in and promote professional development programmes that enhance awareness of gender issues, reduce unconscious bias, and strengthen capacity for gender-responsive decision-making.

Challenges Faced by Educational Leaders in Advancing Gender Equality

Despite growing recognition of the importance of gender equality in education, educational leaders continue to face numerous challenges in translating

policy intentions into practice. These challenges are often structural, cultural, and institutional in nature, and they significantly affect efforts to promote gender equality within economics education.

Deep-Rooted Socio-Cultural Norms and Stereotypes

One of the most persistent challenges confronting educational leaders is the influence of entrenched socio-cultural beliefs about gender roles. Economics is frequently perceived as a male-dominated and mathematically demanding discipline, which discourages female participation and reinforces stereotypes that limit girls' confidence and aspirations. Leaders often struggle to challenge these norms, especially in societies where traditional gender expectations remain strong.

Institutional Resistance to Change

Educational institutions may exhibit resistance to gender-focused reforms due to long-standing practices, power dynamics, and male dominance in leadership structures. Some stakeholders view gender equality initiatives as unnecessary or threatening, making it difficult for leaders to implement reforms related to recruitment, promotion, curriculum reform, and leadership diversification.

Underrepresentation of Women in Leadership Positions

The limited presence of women in senior academic and administrative roles reduces the visibility of female role models and weakens advocacy for gender equality. Educational leaders often operate within systems where decision-making power is concentrated among men, constraining efforts to prioritize and sustain gender-responsive policies.

Policy–Practice Gap

Although many institutions and governments have adopted gender equality policies, a significant gap often exists between policy formulation and effective implementation. Weak enforcement mechanisms, limited monitoring, and lack of accountability hinder leaders' ability to translate policy commitments into tangible outcomes within economics education.

Resource Constraints

Inadequate financial, human, and material resources pose a major challenge to advancing gender equality. Gender-focused programmes such as mentoring, training, and curriculum reform require sustained funding, which is often limited in favour of other institutional needs.

Work–Life Balance Pressures

Women in academia frequently face challenges related to balancing professional responsibilities with family and caregiving roles. Educational leaders may find it difficult to address these issues within rigid institutional structures, leading to slower career progression and reduced leadership participation for women.

Limited Gender-Disaggregated Data

The absence of reliable gender-disaggregated data hampers evidence-based decision-making. Without accurate data on enrolment, performance, promotion, and leadership participation, educational leaders struggle to design targeted interventions or measure progress toward gender equality goals.

Lack of Gender-Responsive Leadership Skills

Some educational leaders lack adequate training and awareness of gender-responsive leadership approaches. This limits their ability to identify subtle forms of bias, adopt inclusive strategies, and lead institutional transformation effectively.

Emerging Opportunities and Future Directions for Gender-Equitable Leadership

Emerging global, regional, and institutional developments present significant opportunities for strengthening gender-equitable leadership in education. As awareness of gender equity increases, educational leaders are better positioned to adopt innovative strategies, leverage policy support, and harness new tools to promote inclusive leadership practices—particularly within economics education.

Leadership Development Programmes for Women

One major opportunity lies in the growing emphasis on leadership development initiatives specifically designed for women. Training programmes, mentorship schemes, and capacity-building workshops help prepare female educators and administrators for leadership roles. Such initiatives enhance confidence, leadership skills, and career advancement, contributing to greater gender balance in educational leadership structures.

Integration of Gender Perspectives into Curriculum and Training

There is increasing recognition of the need to integrate gender perspectives into teacher education, leadership training, and curriculum development. Embedding gender equity content in economics education and leadership preparation programmes helps future leaders develop the knowledge and skills required to implement gender-responsive policies and practices effectively.

Strengthening Policy Alignment and Institutional Commitment

Global and national commitments to gender equality, such as education and development agendas, provide strong policy support for gender-equitable leadership. Future directions include better alignment between international frameworks, national policies, and institutional strategies. Educational leaders who leverage this policy instruments can strengthen implementation, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms.

Use of Technology and Digital Platforms

Advances in digital technology offer new opportunities for promoting gender-equitable leadership. Online learning platforms, virtual mentoring, and digital networking communities provide flexible access to leadership training and professional support, particularly for women balancing multiple responsibilities. Technology also enables data collection and monitoring of gender equity outcomes.

Data-Driven and Evidence-Based Leadership

The growing availability of gender-disaggregated data creates opportunities for evidence-based leadership. Educational leaders can use data to identify gaps, assess progress, and design targeted interventions that promote gender equity. Future leadership practices are likely to place greater emphasis on monitoring, evaluation, and accountability.

Partnerships and Collaborative Networks

Collaboration with government agencies, international organizations, civil society, and professional bodies presents opportunities to strengthen gender-equitable leadership initiatives. Partnerships enable resource sharing, policy advocacy, and the exchange of best practices, thereby enhancing institutional capacity to address gender disparities in education.

Cultural Change and Advocacy

Future directions for gender-equitable leadership involve sustained advocacy and cultural transformation within educational institutions. Leaders are increasingly expected to challenge discriminatory norms, promote inclusive values, and foster environments where diversity and equity are respected and institutionalized.

Implications of Gender-Responsive Leadership for Economics Education

Gender-responsive leadership has far-reaching implications for the quality, inclusiveness, and relevance of economics education. When educational leaders consciously integrate gender perspectives into decision-making, policy implementation, and institutional culture, economics education becomes more equitable and socially responsive.

Improved Access and Participation

Gender-responsive leadership promotes equitable access to economics education by addressing barriers that discourage female participation. Leaders who prioritize inclusive admission policies, targeted outreach, scholarships, and supportive learning environments help increase enrolment and retention of female students in economics programmes. This leads to more balanced gender representation, particularly at advanced levels of study.

Inclusive Curriculum and Pedagogical Practices

Leadership that is sensitive to gender issues encourages the development of curricula that reflect diverse economic experiences and perspectives. Economics content becomes more inclusive when examples, case studies, and policy discussions incorporate gender dimensions such as labour markets, unpaid work, poverty, and development. Gender-responsive pedagogy also supports varied learning styles, thereby improving comprehension and engagement for all students.

Enhanced Academic Performance and Student Outcomes

Supportive leadership practices—such as mentoring, academic advising, and inclusive assessment methods—contribute to improved learning outcomes. Female students, in particular, benefit from environments where stereotypes are challenged and academic confidence is nurtured. Overall, gender-responsive leadership fosters higher motivation, improved performance, and reduced dropout rates in economics education.

Increased Representation in Faculty and Leadership Roles

Gender-responsive leadership promotes fair recruitment, promotion, and professional development practices. This leads to increased representation of women as economics educators, researchers, and academic leaders. Greater female representation enriches teaching, research agendas, and institutional decision-making, while also providing role models that inspire students.

Strengthened Institutional Culture and Governance

Institutions led through gender-responsive approaches tend to develop cultures rooted in fairness, accountability, and respect for diversity. Such environments encourage collaboration, reduce discrimination, and support transparent governance structures. This strengthens institutional credibility and enhances overall educational effectiveness.

Relevance of Economics Education to Societal Needs

By integrating gender perspectives, economics education becomes more aligned with real-world economic challenges. Graduates are better equipped to analyze development issues, design inclusive economic policies, and contribute to sustainable growth. Gender-responsive leadership therefore enhances the societal relevance and policy impact of economics education.

Contribution to Inclusive Economic Development

The long-term implication of gender-responsive leadership is the production of graduates who value equity and inclusiveness in economic decision-making. This contributes to broader national and global goals such as gender equality, poverty reduction, and sustainable development, reinforcing the role of economics education in driving inclusive economic progress.

Conclusion

Gender equity remains a critical concern in economics education, particularly in relation to access, participation, and leadership representation. Despite policy commitments and increased awareness, persistent gender disparities continue to limit the full potential of women and girls within the discipline. This chapter has demonstrated that educational leadership plays a central role in addressing these challenges by shaping institutional culture, guiding policy implementation, and promoting inclusive practices. Gender-responsive leadership provides a transformative pathway for achieving equitable outcomes in economics education. Leaders who intentionally integrate gender perspectives into curriculum design,

teaching practices, recruitment processes, and governance structures contribute to more inclusive and effective educational environments. Such leadership not only improves participation and performance among female students and educators but also enhances the overall relevance and quality of economics education. Ultimately, advancing gender equity through responsive leadership strengthens the capacity of economics education to contribute meaningfully to inclusive economic development and social progress.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen gender equity in economics education through educational leadership:

1. Educational institutions should invest in continuous leadership training focused on gender-responsive and inclusive leadership practices. Such programmes should equip leaders with the skills to identify and address gender biases in policies and institutional processes.
2. Existing gender equity policies should be effectively implemented and monitored. Institutions should establish clear accountability mechanisms, including gender audits and performance indicators, to track progress and ensure compliance.
3. Educational leaders should encourage the integration of gender perspectives into economics curricula and teaching methods. This includes incorporating gender-related economic issues and adopting pedagogical approaches that support diverse learning needs.
4. Institutions should establish structured mentoring and professional development programmes for female students and staff in economics education. Such initiatives can enhance academic confidence, career progression, and leadership readiness.
5. Transparent and fair recruitment, promotion, and leadership selection processes should be adopted to increase female representation in academic and leadership positions within economics education.
6. Educational leaders should utilize gender-disaggregated data to inform planning, resource allocation, and policy decisions. Evidence-based approaches will support targeted interventions and measurable outcomes.
7. Institutions should collaborate with government agencies, professional bodies, and international organizations to strengthen gender equity initiatives and share best practices in gender-responsive leadership.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING

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Introduction

Leadership and conflict remain deeply intertwined realities within modern organizations, as leaders inevitably shape how tensions emerge, escalate, or transform into opportunities for learning. Recent scholarship emphasizes that conflict is not inherently dysfunctional; rather, its outcomes depend on leadership dynamics - the mindset, emotional regulation, communication patterns, and situational judgments leaders apply across diverse contexts (Ayub & Jehn, 2021; Jiang et al., 2023). Studies increasingly show that emotionally intelligent and relationally competent leaders foster climates where disagreements are expressed safely and channeled toward problem-solving instead of interpersonal hostility (Kong & Xing, 2022; Newman et al., 2024). Adaptive leadership research further demonstrates that leaders who diagnose the nature of conflict - distinguishing technical from adaptive tensions - are more effective in managing uncertainty, rapid change, and crisis-induced stressors (Heifetz et al., 2021; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2022). These findings reinforce the emerging consensus that leadership behaviours are decisive in determining whether conflict becomes a destructive force that erodes trust and performance or a generative process that strengthens collaboration, creativity, and organizational resilience.

Building on this view, recent evidence highlights the need for leaders to integrate multiple competencies - sensemaking, negotiation agility, ethical judgment, and cultural intelligence - as organizations face increasingly complex and diverse conflict scenarios (Nguyen & Kim, 2023; Olanrewaju et al., 2025). Scholars argue that conflict dynamics cannot be fully understood without examining organizational culture, team composition, power asymmetries, and external pressures such as digital transformation, workforce diversity, and geopolitical uncertainty (Zhang & Tu, 2023; Salas et al., 2024). Accordingly, this chapter draws on contemporary literature to synthesize: (a) foundational and emergent leadership dynamics relevant to conflict; (b) modern conflict typologies and underlying mechanisms; (c) evidence-based strategies and behaviours leaders use to resolve conflict constructively; (d) measurement approaches and practical diagnostic frameworks;

and (e) ethical, contextual, and cross-cultural factors shaping leader interventions, alongside key future research directions. Together, these insights provide a rich and human-centered understanding of how leaders can transform conflict from a source of friction into a strategic asset.

Theoretical Foundations: Leadership, Power, and Conflict

Three theoretical lenses help structure the study of leadership and conflict:

Leaders' choices about how to respond to conflict are never made in a vacuum - they are conditioned by the situation. Contingency and situational models remind us that the "best" conflict response depends on task structure, resource pressure, and follower readiness: directive, highly structured interventions that resolve a technical dispute may be disastrous when the problem is adaptive and requires learning (Voges, 2022; Ferine et al., 2021). Practically speaking, a leader who rigidly applies one conflict style across contexts risks either suppressing useful dissent or failing to contain relationship tensions; recent empirical work reinforces that effective leaders first diagnose the problem type and then match tactics (e.g., facilitation, arbitration, or experimentation) to that diagnosis (Monehin, 2022).

Relational and social-exchange perspectives shift attention from abstract styles to the quality of everyday interactions: high-quality leader–member exchange (LMX) produces trust, voice, and procedural fairness, which in turn reduce the slide from task disagreement into destructive interpersonal conflict. Contemporary studies show that teams with strong LMX report fewer affective spillovers and are more likely to use interest-based negotiation and joint problem solving, particularly in hybrid and multicultural work settings (Yang et al., 2023; Petrilli, 2024; Maharvi, 2023). In short, the social currency that leaders build - reciprocity, predictable support, and clear expectations - is often the most practical buffer against escalation.

Adaptive and complexity-informed approaches add a third, complementary lens by treating conflict as information to be probed rather than a problem always to be solved top-down. Adaptive leaders who invite multiple perspectives, run small experiments, and redistribute decision authority when knowledge sits elsewhere convert ambiguous conflict into collective learning (Chughtai, 2023; Sott, 2025). Recent reviews and field studies indicate that in volatile or crisis conditions those adaptive moves-asking open questions, tolerating short-term discomfort for long-term adaptation, and institutionalising lessons-consistently produce more resilient outcomes than purely procedural fixes (Alanazi, 2025; Chughtai, 2023).

Leadership Dynamics: Styles, Capabilities, and Mechanisms

Transformational and relational leadership

Transformational leaders do more than set lofty goals - they create a shared narrative that helps colleagues reinterpret conflict as a route to better

solutions rather than a personal attack. Empirical studies from the early 2020s show that transformational behaviours (inspirational framing, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation) reduce the likelihood that task disagreements metastasize into destructive relationship conflicts, often by reframing disputes around collective purpose and by strengthening trust (Haryanto, 2022; Mekonnen et al., 2023). At the interpersonal level, leaders who intentionally cultivate psychological safety and inclusive dialogue - inviting minority views and acknowledging mistakes — build a relational buffer that lets teams argue over ideas without fracturing ties (McKinsey, 2021; El-Ashry et al., 2025).

Adaptive leadership and flexibility.

Where problems are novel, ambiguous, or fast-moving, effective leaders act less like decision machines and more like learning facilitators: they diagnose whether the issue is technical or adaptive, run modest experiments (probes), and redistribute authority so those with the most domain knowledge can contribute to solutions. Recent systematic reviews and field studies highlight that adaptive leaders who combine humility, transparent sense-making, and a capacity to tolerate short-term discomfort turn conflict into organizational learning rather than gridlock (Sott, 2025; Alanazi, 2025). In practice this means leaders explicitly signal that conflict can surface useful information, design safe ways to test options, and then use after-action learning to institutionalize what worked—a sequence shown repeatedly to enhance resilience in crisis contexts.

Transactional, authoritarian, and laissez-faire tendencies.

Transactional leadership-contingent rewards and clear expectations-stabilizes routine tasks and can be effective for short, well-defined disputes, yet it fares less well when conflicts require creative trade-offs or relational repair (Khairy et al., 2023). Authoritarian or heavy-handed approaches often silence dissent and create unresolved grievances that resurface later, while laissez-faire or passive leadership tends to leave conflicts unattended and allows small frictions to ossify into interpersonal rifts (Lundmark, 2022; Zhang, 2023). The empirical signal in recent literature favors pragmatic pluralism: leaders should use directive control where rapid clarity is needed, but lean on relational and adaptive methods for complex, people-dependent disputes.

Emotional intelligence (EI) and conflict regulation.

Emotional intelligence - the capacity to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions in oneself and others - is a powerful, trainable lever for conflict prevention and repair. Meta-analytic reviews and systematic syntheses since 2021 report consistent associations between leader EI and improved conflict outcomes: leaders higher in EI reduce affective escalation, model self-regulation during tense exchanges, and facilitate more constructive negotiations and reconciliations (Coronado-Maldonado et al., 2023; Doğru et al., 2022; Mehler et al., 2024). Recent intervention studies further suggest EI training yields measurable

improvements in team collaboration and lowers recurrence of interpersonal disputes when combined with structural supports such as mediation pathways and clear role definitions.

Conflict Typologies and Dynamics

Scholars commonly distinguish among at least three conflict types:

Task conflict: Teams most often experience task conflict as lively disagreement about ideas, goals, or technical choices. When handled well—within a climate of psychological safety and clear cognitive norms—task conflict fuels creativity, sharper decision making, and better solutions because it brings diverse information into view (Nunkoo, 2021; Huerta, 2024). Recent field studies and reviews show that task disagreement becomes productive when leaders and teams explicitly separate idea evaluation from identity threats, invite minority arguments, and use structured processes (e.g., devil's-advocate, time-boxed dissent) so debate stays cognitive rather than personal (Zhang, 2024; Mogård, 2022). In short, task conflict is an asset when the social conditions and facilitation skills to contain affect are in place.

Process Conflict: Process conflict involves arguments over roles, responsibilities, timelines, and decision rules - tends to sap energy if left unattended, but it is also the most tractable type of conflict through clear design and negotiation. Empirical work from banking, healthcare, and project teams shows that clarifying role boundaries, codifying decision rights, and negotiating process norms sharply reduce recurrent process disputes (Shrestha, 2024; Zhang, 2024). Leaders who combine transparent allocation of responsibilities with periodic revisits of "who does what" prevent small coordination frictions from hardening into deeper rifts; when process disagreements require change, participatory redesign (not top-down edicts) produces greater buy-in and fewer backlash effects (Nikitara, 2024).

Relationship (Affective) Conflict: By contrast, relationship (affective) conflict—rooted in interpersonal incompatibilities, mistrust, and negative emotions—is the most corrosive for team cohesion and performance. A growing body of recent research confirms that affective conflict predicts lower team learning, higher burnout, and weaker transactive memory systems unless actively repaired (Hwang, 2024; Yin, 2022). Crucially, studies emphasize that relationship conflict often springs from unresolved task or process disputes that leaked into the personal realm; therefore, early containment, restorative practices (e.g., facilitated dialogue, apology and repair rituals), and rebuilding of psychological safety are essential to restore functionality (Huerta, 2024; Hwang, 2024).

Leaders face a genuine paradox: a modest amount of task-related disagreement often sharpens collective thinking and improves decision quality, yet the very same debates can become corrosive if they spill over into personal territory. Meta-analytic and recent empirical work confirm this nuance — task conflict can produce richer information and better choices when cognitive debate

remains uncoupled from negative affect (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Cai et al., 2024). However, longitudinal and field studies across virtual and co-located teams show a common pathway to trouble: misattribution, poor emotional regulation, or weak procedural norms allow task arguments to be perceived as personal attacks, producing relationship conflict that reduces cooperation, increases strain, and erodes decision quality (Shahzad, 2023; Mogård, Rørstad, & Bang, 2022). Practically, the leadership task is therefore twofold — to cultivate the information-rich benefits of task debate (e.g., by setting clear cognitive norms, using structured dissent techniques, and signalling that challenge is welcome) while simultaneously using psychological-safety building and early repair routines to prevent affective spillover (Bahadurzada, Edmondson, & Kerrissey, 2024; Dong, Li, & Roxas-Hernan, 2024).

Conflict researchers and practitioners also emphasize that conflict is a process, not a single event, and that leaders can, and should, intervene at multiple stages. Classic stage models (latent → perceived → felt → manifest → aftermath) remain a practical roadmap for timing interventions (Pondy, 1967), and recent measurement and validation work on escalation ladders provides tools for diagnosing severity and choosing the right response (Scheppa-Lahyani & Zapf, 2023). Interventions are most effective when matched to the stage: preventive design (clarifying roles and decision rules) and psychological-safety work early on; low-intensity mediation and structured facilitation at the felt/early manifest stages; formal arbitration or restorative practices if conflicts become fully manifest; and deliberate aftermath activities (debriefs, reparative dialogues, and policy fixes) to rebuild trust and capture learning (Cai et al., 2024; Scheppa-Lahyani & Zapf, 2023). In short, good leadership channels the upside of cognitive conflict while using timely, stage-appropriate interventions and safety-building practices to stop a productive debate from turning into a damaging personal war.

Mechanisms: How Leaders Shape Conflict Outcomes

Leaders shape how conflicts play out by deliberately changing the rules of the game and the social field in which disagreements occur. Clear structures - well-defined roles, explicit decision rules, and agreed escalation pathways - act like guardrails: they reduce ambiguity about who decides what and when, which in turn lowers the frequency of costly process disputes and the misdirected blame that fuels escalation (Leblanc, 2024; Tavares, 2024). Equally important is the relational scaffolding leaders create day-to-day: by modelling and rewarding respectful dissent, protecting minority viewpoints, and institutionalizing habits for constructive critique (e.g., devil's-advocate roles, structured turn-taking), leaders keep task conflict cognitive rather than personal and preserve the team's problem-solving capacity (van der Berg et al., 2022; Gale, 2023). In short, design and norms work together - structure reduces triggers, while relational scaffolding determines whether differences become resources or liabilities.

Beyond rules and norms, leaders influence emotional tone and meaning - two decisive mechanisms in whether conflict escalates. When leaders regulate their own affect and explicitly name emotions in tense conversations, they arrest emotional contagion and model composure for the group; experimental and intervention studies show such emotion-regulation practices measurably reduce negative affect spillover and improve the mood climate during disputes (Park, 2024; Pinus et al., 2025). Simultaneously, leaders who reframe disagreements around shared goals and collective purpose change the story people tell about the conflict, converting "them versus us" into "how can we solve this together?" (Gale, 2023). Finally, in complex technical disputes, adaptive leaders decentralize decision authority so domain experts can resolve substantive issues locally while the leader focuses on restoring relationships and integrating learning — a dynamic shown to improve both solution quality and relational repair in volatile contexts (Sott, 2025; Tavares, 2024). Together these mechanisms - structure, scaffolding, emotional regulation, framing, and adaptive distribution of authority - explain how skillful leadership turns inevitable conflict into constructive organizational learning rather than destructive infighting.

Conflict-Resolution Strategies and Leader Interventions

Effective conflict resolution in contemporary organizations requires leaders to combine preventive structural design, evidence-based negotiation and mediation techniques, and humane interpersonal behaviours that restore trust and sustain collaboration.

Preventive measures - good organizational design and explicit team norms are the most powerful upstream interventions leaders can deploy to reduce the frequency and severity of workplace disputes. When roles are clear, decision rights are codified, and teams are cross-trained so work can flex around temporary shortages, the routine ambiguities that generate process conflict are greatly reduced (Lan, 2025; Zani, 2024). Equally important are behavioural norms: training teams to separate idea critique from personal critique (for example, "challenge ideas, not people"), running brief pre-mortems, and institutionalizing structured dissent (devil's advocate, pre-meeting notes) create predictable channels for disagreement and protect fragile psychological safety so task debate remains productive (Hernaus, 2024; van der Berg et al., 2022).

Direct resolution techniques work best when they preserve dignity and orient parties toward shared interests rather than entrenched positions. Interest-based or principled negotiation - coaching parties to surface underlying needs and to generate options for mutual gain - has shown strong practical value in workplace settings and can be taught effectively through interactive modules and facilitated exercises (Fleischer et al., 2023). Where relationships have frayed or power imbalances exist, neutral mediation or third-party facilitation provides a confidential, impartial forum to reframe issues and craft durable agreements; large

practitioner reviews and field studies across sectors show mediation reduces recurrence and restores working relationships when used early (CIPD, n.d.; Ajei & colleagues, 2024; Nasreen et al., 2024; Bahshwan, 2024). Time-boxed problem-solving workshops and structured dialogue sessions - where the leader's role is to set rules and protect psychological safety-are especially effective for multi-stakeholder disputes because they surface facts, expand options, and create a record of agreed next steps (Fleischer et al., 2023; local field evaluations).

Leadership behaviours that aid resolution combine skilled interpersonal practice with transparent process design. Active listening and empathic inquiry - asking clarifying questions, reflecting feelings, and validating concerns - calm heated interactions and reduce defensiveness, a finding confirmed across intervention studies and communication models (Active Listening model review, 2024). When leaders also commit to transparent procedures and procedural fairness (clear timelines, neutral fact-finding, consistent application of rules), parties are far more likely to accept outcomes and avoid relapse into conflict (organization design and fairness literature). Finally, rapid containment of affective escalation - naming emotions, pausing the discussion, and using short cooling-off protocols or mediated check-ins - stops emotional contagion and protects the possibility of later repair (Pinus et al., 2025; Park, 2024). In combination, these practices let leaders convert immediate tensions into learning and renewed collaboration rather than lingering resentment.

Practical Frameworks: An Integrated Leader Toolkit

Diagnose: Effective conflict intervention begins with accurate diagnosis, as misidentifying the type or stage of conflict can inadvertently escalate tensions. Contemporary research recommends differentiating among task, process, and relationship conflicts while also mapping the conflict's temporal stage - from latent tension to manifest confrontation (Zhang & Wei, 2022; Ogunfowora et al., 2023). Leaders increasingly use brief structured interviews, pulse surveys, and triangulated observations to surface hidden concerns, power asymmetries, and emotional undercurrents before selecting an intervention approach (Muthusamy & Alas, 2024). Recent organizational behaviour studies emphasize that this diagnostic clarity is not merely technical; it requires leaders to listen without judgment, perceive emotional cues, and understand contextual triggers, especially in hybrid or remote environments where conflict signals can be less visible (Lee & Kim, 2023).

Match Response: Once the conflict is diagnosed, leaders must match their intervention to the conflict type, an approach strongly supported by contingency-based conflict management research (DeChurch et al., 2022; Martins & Nunes, 2024). For task conflict, collaborative problem-solving and joint fact-finding are typically most effective because they allow teams to leverage cognitive diversity without slipping into personal antagonism (Halevy & Cohen, 2023). Process

conflicts, by contrast, often require clarifying roles, decision rights, and workflow rules, coupled with negotiation of procedures to restore coordination and reduce ambiguity (Santos & Boso, 2025). When relationship conflict emerges, evidence shows that early relational repair, acknowledgment of emotions, and facilitated mediation help prevent deeper fractures in trust and identity (Skarlicki et al., 2021). The leader's sensitivity in choosing the right tool remains a core predictor of conflict recovery success.

Deploy EI Practices: Emotional intelligence (EI) has become a central leadership capability in conflict regulation, with meta-analytic evidence from 2021–2025 consistently confirming its predictive value for de-escalation and constructive dialogue (Li et al., 2022; Schlaerth & Owens, 2023). Leaders with strong EI model calm behaviour, accurately identify emotional states in the room, and help parties articulate feelings without blame - an approach shown to reduce affective spillover and preserve dignity (Creswell & Maier, 2024). By naming emotions and redirecting attention toward shared goals, EI-enabled leaders shift conflict from a reactive emotional cycle to a reflective, solution-oriented exchange. This human-centered approach is especially vital in multicultural and high-stress environments where misinterpretation of emotional cues is more likely (Nguyen & Park, 2025).

Use Adaptive Probes: In complex or ambiguous disputes - where the root causes are not immediately clear—adaptive leadership frameworks encourage the use of small experimental probes rather than premature, top-down solutions (Heifetz et al., 2023; Amoroso & Petrucci, 2024). These low-risk experiments, such as pilot workflow adjustments or temporary role reassignments, generate real-time learning that clarifies whether tensions stem from technical misalignments or deeper adaptive issues (Garcia & Bell, 2022). Empirical studies across healthcare, education, and high-tech organizations show that these probes uncover hidden interdependencies, reduce polarized assumptions, and help teams co-create solutions grounded in evidence rather than speculation (Bianchi & Torres, 2024). This approach humanizes conflict management by valuing shared learning over authoritative decree.

Institutionalize Learning: The final step involves consolidating lessons so that the organization becomes more resilient to future conflicts. After-action reviews and structured reflection sessions enable teams to identify root causes, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, and codify new norms or processes that minimize recurrence (Silva & Johnson, 2023; Ekpenyong & Rowe, 2024). Research from 2021–2025 stresses that institutionalizing learning transforms conflict from an episodic disruption into a continuous improvement opportunity, particularly when insights are integrated into training, workflow design, and leadership development systems (Carter & Huang, 2025). Leaders who close the learning loop not only enhance organizational conflict competence but also build psychological safety by signaling that mistakes and disagreements are legitimate sources of collective growth.

Measurement and Assessment

Evaluating leadership effectiveness in conflict resolution requires a balanced focus on the quality of the interaction processes, the durability and human impact of the outcomes, and the use of rigorous mixed-methods assessments that capture how conflict dynamics evolve over time.

Process Indicators: Assessing leadership effectiveness in conflict resolution begins with the quality of the processes that unfold before, during, and immediately after disputes. Recent research emphasizes that psychological safety, openness to dissent, perceived procedural fairness, and the presence or absence of affective spillover are strong indicators of whether leaders are managing conflict constructively (Edmondson & Lei, 2023; Korsgaard & Jeong, 2024). These process factors can be measured through multi-item surveys, coded meeting transcripts, and structured observations that capture how leaders encourage dialogue, regulate emotions, and balance power dynamics (Brett, 2022). Scholars increasingly highlight the need for leaders to create conversational spaces where disagreements are expressed without fear of retribution, as this relational climate significantly reduces escalation and promotes collaborative problem solving (Rahmadani et al., 2024).

Outcome Indicators: Beyond process quality, outcome measures provide a complementary lens for evaluating leaders' conflict resolution effectiveness. Contemporary studies recommend assessing resolution durability - how often conflicts recur - as well as the objective quality of solutions, such as improvements in workflow efficiency, decision accuracy, or task coordination (DeChurch et al., 2022; Santos & Boso, 2025). Additional outcome indicators include team performance metrics, employee well-being (e.g., stress levels, burnout indicators), and retention intentions, all of which are shown to be sensitive to how leaders handle disputes (Tuckey & Yip, 2023). Importantly, research in organizational psychology suggests that even when conflicts appear resolved, latent emotional or relational tensions may linger, making follow-up evaluations crucial to determining whether the outcomes are meaningful and stable over time (Lin & Vogel, 2024).

Mixed-Methods and Longitudinal Approaches: To capture the complexity of leadership dynamics in conflict, scholars increasingly advocate for mixed-methods designs that integrate behavioral observation, social network analysis, and pre–post survey panels (Halevy & Cohen, 2023; Muthusamy & Alas, 2024). Behavioral observations reveal real-time communication patterns and micro-interactions, while social network analysis uncovers alliance formation, polarization, and information flow during conflicts (Kozlowski & Chao, 2023). Longitudinal approaches have been particularly valuable in fields such as healthcare, higher education, and public administration, where conflict episodes unfold over extended periods and involve repeated interactions among interdependent actors (Silva & Johnson, 2023; Ekpenyong & Rowe, 2024). These designs allow researchers to track delayed

effects of interventions, monitor changes in trust and psychological safety, and evaluate whether leaders' conflict competencies improve over time - providing a far more nuanced understanding than one-time assessments.

Challenges, Limits, and Ethical Considerations

Effective conflict management in organizations requires leaders to navigate power dynamics, cultural variations, and the risk of conflict instrumentalization, using ethical, transparent, and context-sensitive strategies to foster trust, collaboration, and sustainable performance.

Power dynamics and bias: Conflict in organizations often mirrors the distribution of power, with leaders sometimes playing an unintentional role in its escalation. Research shows that when leaders favour certain team members or fail to check their own biases, tensions intensify and satisfaction declines (John, 2024). Ethical leadership is therefore more than a set of principles; it requires deliberate reflexivity, transparency in decision-making, and mechanisms such as formal recusal or third-party mediation to ensure impartiality (John, 2024). By embedding these safeguards, leaders can transform potential flashpoints into opportunities for constructive dialogue, rather than allowing bias to erode trust and cohesion.

Cultural variation in conflict expression and resolution: Conflict is deeply contextual, shaped by the cultural lenses through which individuals perceive disagreements. Cross-cultural studies reveal that team members' preferences for conflict resolution - whether competing, accommodating, or collaborating - vary significantly across cultures (Wang, Lyu, & Pitt, 2024). Imposing a "one-size-fits-all" strategy risks misunderstanding, frustration, and reduced cooperation (Yamini, 2025). Effective leaders recognize these nuances, adapting their approach to the cultural dynamics of their teams, and in doing so, foster inclusive environments where diverse perspectives are valued and conflicts become opportunities for learning rather than sources of division.

Risk of instrumentalisation and measurement pitfalls: Conflict can be weaponized by leaders seeking control, while traditional metrics often fail to capture the relational damage that unresolved disputes cause. Evidence shows that toxic leadership, especially in diverse teams, not only impedes innovation but also erodes long-term team effectiveness (Babatunde et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2025; Panda et al., 2025). Over-reliance on short-term performance metrics can mask these consequences, creating a false sense of resolution while underlying distrust festers (Babatunde et al., 2023). Transparent reporting, ethical codes, and continuous monitoring of team relationships are essential to prevent manipulation and to ensure that conflict resolution strengthens, rather than weakens, organizational resilience (Panda et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2025).

Practical Implications for Leaders and Organizations

To foster constructive conflict management, organizations and leaders must proactively build emotional intelligence, create safe channels for dissent,

institutionalize mediation, monitor early warning signals, promote psychological safety, integrate restorative practices, and continuously assess workplace well-being.

Train for emotional intelligence (EI) and adaptive competencies: Structured programs that develop EI, self-awareness, perspective-taking, and facilitation skills reduce interpersonal conflicts and enhance collaboration. Leaders with high EI better manage disagreements constructively, promoting trust, empathy, and long-term team cohesion (John, 2024; PMC, 2023).

Design for safe dissent: Organizations should create structured channels, such as devil's-advocate roles or formal debate formats, that encourage task-focused disagreement. Safe dissent fosters innovation and improved decision-making, allowing employees to voice diverse perspectives without fear, transforming conflict into productive dialogue rather than destructive tension (Wang, Lyu, & Pitt, 2024; ScienceDirect, 2023).

Institutionalize mediation resources: Maintaining trained internal or external mediators ensures early intervention before disputes escalate into lasting relational damage. Formal mediation frameworks increase resolution success, preserve trust, and reinforce organizational norms of fairness, creating a culture where conflict is addressed promptly and constructively (PMC, 2023; Polity, 2025).

Monitor early warning signals: Tracking patterns such as repetitive emails, meeting avoidance, or sudden coalition formation allows leaders to detect brewing conflicts early. Proactive monitoring, combined with intervention, prevents escalation, supports team cohesion, and ensures organizational resilience, reducing both relational harm and long-term performance disruption (ScienceDirect, 2023; Wikipedia, 2022).

Promote psychological safety and inclusive leadership: Leaders cultivating inclusive, supportive environments enable employees to speak up, raise concerns, and share alternative ideas. Psychological safety reduces latent conflict, increases engagement, and strengthens collaboration. Ethical and inclusive leadership directly influences team dynamics, trust, and long-term organizational performance (Yang, Wang, Huang, et al., 2025; Bano, Li, & Imran, 2024).

Integrate restorative practices: Restorative approaches, including facilitated dialogue and restorative circles, emphasize empathy, repair, and relationship rebuilding. These practices transform conflict into learning opportunities, minimize punitive measures, and restore trust, making workplace conflict resolution more sustainable and humane while strengthening long-term team cohesion and performance (Shin & Park, 2024; Wachtel, 2023).

Embed continuous climate and well-being monitoring: Periodic assessment of workplace climate, psychosocial safety, and employee well-being identifies potential conflict early. Proactive monitoring reduces stress, prevents escalation, and ensures intervention is timely. Continuous evaluation supports sustainable organizational

culture and mitigates relational, emotional, and performance-related risks (Amodu, Ansah, & Sarfo, 2024).

Conclusion

Leadership dynamics and conflict resolution are deeply intertwined: how leaders behave fundamentally shapes how conflict is understood and addressed, while the emergence and trajectory of conflict often expose both the strengths and blind spots in leadership approaches. Contemporary evidence (2021–2025) consistently shows that adaptive, emotionally astute, and relationally sensitive leadership competencies significantly predict constructive conflict resolution and organizational resilience Leaders who match their conflict-management strategies to the nature and phase of conflict - combining empathy, fairness, and flexibility - enable disagreement to become a constructive force rather than a destructive one. As a result, institutions that embed structures and learning mechanisms supporting emotional intelligence, procedural fairness, and psychological safety transform conflict from a threat into a lever for innovation, learning, and sustainable growth.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

The world today is dynamic in nature, everything is changing on daily basis, people, organization, societies, science and technology, churches, businesses, leadership, politics, families and many more are changing their operations and activities from time to time. Leadership is a requirement for coordination and achievement in any institution, family, community or group that is aimed for success, growth and development. These can be achieved through dynamic leadership where all the sectors are involved in the administration processes. In institutions where different kinds of people meet for their different purposes, aims and objectives, it takes a dynamic leader to put necessary measures in place to make a great impact administratively and academically in terms of adequate implementation of policies and curriculum to achieve the students, staff and institutional goals. Leadership dynamics is a situation where different forces are put in place to influence others to work towards achieving a common organizational or institutional goals or objectives. One of the institutions in Nigeria where teachers are produced to contribute to the growth and development of the society is Colleges of Education (COEs).

Education is the bedrock of development of any functional system, there is no nation that can develop or grow without an organized system of education. The reason is this, education makes every individual responsive and responsible citizens by preparing them for various activities within the economic, social, administrative, political, religious, technological and other structures of the society. The only profession that can inculcate in the individual these virtues is the teaching profession where teachers are pedagogically trained to inculcate in the citizens morals, abilities, attitudes, knowledge, skills, confidence, rights and responsibilities. The individual in charge of inculcating such virtues is the teacher.

The teacher, is a person that has the knowledge about teaching and learning principles. He is a professional with pedagogical skills, values, knowledge and competencies. According to Ireyefoju in Nwalado (2018), a teacher is one who teaches skills, facts and values that aid the development of the educated in the

skills and culture of a people. The teacher passes the ethics, moral, religion of a people to the young ones. He further states that a teacher is one who uses education as an instrument to bring about the development of the individuals and the society. One of the institutions where the teachers are trained professionally is College of Education.

The College of Education, according to Collins (2022), is a professional training institution for teachers in Nigeria. In Nigerian school system, Colleges of Education are tertiary institutions that offer the minimum teaching qualification, the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) to the recipients (NCCE, 2019). College of Education is a train-the-trainers` institution, that establishes the objectives of training and equipping teachers for their esteemed functions in the teaching profession (Excellence and Education Network in Collins 2022). These trained teachers can be adequately produced and qualified if effective and regular development programmes are put in place from time to time. The need for adequate and regular teacher development programmes is because of the dynamic nature of the society and school system.

The teachers in the Colleges of Education system need to be regularly updated and developed continually in other to better their professional capabilities as regards instructional delivery in their subject, knowledge and content using modern technologies. These regular update and continuous development programme for teachers can only be effective, efficient and productive when the leaders in Colleges of Education in Nigeria are dynamic in their administrations. Based on the above background, this study examined leadership dynamics and teacher development programmes in colleges of education in Nigeria.

Concept of Leadership

According to Boles and Davenport in Nwaham (2008), leadership is a process in which an individual takes initiatives to assist a group to move towards producing goals that are acceptable, to maintain the group and to dispose of those needs of the individuals within the group that impelled them to join it. Leadership as a process tends to influence people and enable management to make the people do voluntarily what should be done and do it well (Ibrahim, 2018). According to Bass in Ibrahim (2018) leadership consists of influencing the attitudes and behaviours of individuals and the interaction within and between groups for the purpose of achieving goals. Leaders, however use vision and judgment to create and to do the right things. Great leaders communicate their vision to their employees and wisely, use power to make their ideas a reality. They devote everything they have to their task, and they simply do not think about failures. According to Miller and Akume (2002) leadership is the dominating factor in motivation. A leader worthy of the name has the ability to lead and not to drive, he should exercise authority smoothly.

Peretemode (2000) lists the qualities of a good leader as follows; A visionary and goal setter, takes responsible risks, delegate authority and responsibilities, shares the glory of the organization, takes responsibility, he/she is trusted, has sense of humour, team builder emotional tolerance/human understanding. Leadership and management are two essential functions in business. Leadership represents individuals involved with balancing varying interests among managers, employees and other business stakeholders. Management commonly is defined as the organization and coordination of various economic resources in a business. While leaders can be managers, managers may not be leaders. Leaders often have specific character traits that lend their skills more to directing a company than managing resources. Leadership traits include enthusiasm, conscientiousness, boldness, self-assurance and competitiveness. These characteristics give individuals intangible business skills for accomplishing tasks and inspiring people to work with the leader during tough situations. Specific organizational leadership traits may include intuitiveness, maturity, team orientation, charisma and empathy. These may closely relate to the organizational structure of the business in which the leader works.

Leadership is taking the lead in one's field and career, it is not in the title worn as a leader, but in the values they bear. It is not an appointment but an attainment. Leadership is not about leading people, but it is about taking the lead in a given task. There are many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. Scholars like Abiodun and Mayowa in Ibrahim (2018) defined leadership as a process of motivating followers to utilize available services, materials and human resources to maximize productivity. Leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objective enthusiastically. It is the human factor which brings group together and motivates them towards achieving a common goal. Supporting the views of the above scholars, McShane and Alinow (2013) looked at leadership as the process of influencing people and providing an enrollment for them to achieve team or organization objectives. Shaibu and Mbaegbu (2012) referred to leadership as the directing process of inspiring and empowering others to voluntarily commit themselves to achieving the leader's vision. Leadership is based on interpersonal relationship and can also be exercised by people throughout an organization and the best organization has effective leaders at various levels. Without a dynamic leadership, an organization or the society will be at the mercy and muddle of men and machines. Human activities such as planning, organizing and decision-making are dormant cocoons until the leader triggers the power motivation in people and guides them towards goals (Mbaegbu, Okocha and Izekor in Shaibu and Mbaegbu 2012). Example in a society, effective leadership is prone for development unity and peace. According to Ordu (2016), dynamic leader helps group of people define their goals and find ways to achieve them. This he does using power and persuasion to ensure that the subordinate have the motivation and role clarity to achieve specific goals.

Leadership transforms potential into reality. It is the ultimate act which brings to success all of the potentials that is in an organization and or society.

Dynamic leadership is central to human resource development in educational institutions. According to Sathye in Collins (2022), leadership in academic institutions is more, diverse and complex than leadership in other public and private sectors. Such difference emanates from the fact that leadership in academic institutions is concerned with maximizing such stakeholders' values as students, staff, government and the public at large. This implies that leaders in academic have to be more competent and effective in order to satisfy these diverse stakeholders at the same time.

However, leadership and human resource development in Nigerian institutions is still a source of sustained concern on teacher's efficiency. This is because the ability of any organization to achieve its goals depends largely on the quality of its human resources and more importantly on how they are managed. Many educationists will fully admit that the school resources are being mismanaged and underutilized simply because the schools lack qualified personnel and management of resources needed for the improvement of instructions (Ikona in Osokoya 2020). According to Drucker in Ezeani (2016) good organizational structure does not by itself guarantee good performance. Human resource is as a fact of life of the existence, survival and development of an organization as food is to man. Likert in Ezeani (2016) further asserts that all the tasks of management, managing the human component is central and most important task because all depend on how well it is done. The implication is that the type of leader and his leadership style will go a long way in influencing the human resource development strategies on teachers in educational institutions.

Erdamar in Ezeani (2016) pointed out that the knowledge, awareness and application of qualified leaders in human resource management and development is integral to the effective functioning of education leaders as it helps to provide a foundation for the growth and promotion of education systems. Skilled and professionally qualified leaders in human resource management and development are considered to perform better for the development of the organization than the unqualified and unskilled ones. Hoffman and Shrew in Abiodun and Mayowa (2015) emphasized that the leader's knowledge and skills of human resource management and development help in promoting the efficiency and efficacy of the staff which leads to the development of their organization at large. The concept of utilizing human resource development in the corporate sector to achieve the desired goals has almost the same implication in the education sector. Leaders are required to be acquainted with the skills needed for effective leadership and management for the development of their institutions and well-being of the human resource employed.

Leadership entails a complex process by which a person influences others to accomplish a mission, task or objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it cohesive and coherent. The implication of this is that wherever there is

an efficient and effective management system, there must be an effective leader. Leadership is defined as the influence, the art or process of influencing people to enable them strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals.

School leadership is the process of enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teacher and parents towards achieving common educational goals. This term is often used synonymously with educational leadership. The concept of leadership was favoured because it conveys dynamism and productivity. The principal or school head is commonly thought to be the school leader, however, school leadership may include other persons such as members of a formal leadership team and other persons who contribute toward the aims of the school. In the educational process, persons who manage are located at all levels for example pupils in classroom in the context of working with small groups, teachers, parents, as partners, principals, counsellors and ministers.

The effectiveness of the overall management structure is based on the effectiveness of individuals, teams, institutions, and the system. Leadership is one of the functional areas of management, based on the personal abilities of individuals of which for this work at managerial level, managerial skills, and managerial styles are especially significant. The primary determinant of learning is teaching the teacher communication skills in order to acquire competence in leadership. Regardless of the objective, a person who wants to convey a message tries to make the message clear and logical so that the recipient would receive it. Technical problems are related to communication between employees and customers, parents and who gets in the way of successful motivation.

Elements of Leadership

Akerele in Nzotta (2010), Flippo (1980) and Nzotta (2010) outlined four distinct elements of leadership they a discussed as follows:

1. Authority: There must exist first, clearly defined authority/power of the leader and the method of exercising this authority will determine the effectiveness of the leader. Leaders without authority and power are usually very ineffective.
2. There must also exist an ability to comprehend that human beings have different motivating forces at varying times and in different situations
3. There must be an ability to act in a way that will develop a climate for responding to and arousing motivation.
4. The style of the leader is also important and a dispensable ingredient in leadership, every leader must be identified with a particular style of leadership. When a style of leadership is applied in organization, it will affect the development of human resources positively or negatively.

Principles of Leadership

Bariden (2002), Nzotta (2010), Robins and Judge (2007) have identified five basic principles of leadership which are important to the enhancement of human resource development in organizations. These principles entail that:

1. People generally go only where their leaders lead or allow them to go. This fact is basically true in all situations. The subordinates will move in the direction the leaders lead or allows them to go. In the organization chart the course and direction which the followers thread. The vision of the leader, in this instance becomes the guiding light for the followers.
2. Good leaders will take their followers as far as they themselves are able and willing to go. Leaders cannot take their followers beyond their own capabilities. This is an important principle which holds in all situations. They improve their performances through training and also show willingness to lead. Most leaders have great potentials and abilities but are not willing to put forth effort and sacrifices which good leadership demands. Willingness can be developed according to Wiweharuck in Bariden (2002) through getting involved in action, making time to understand the need and results from a particular action, total dedication to a course, definite priorities in one's life, discipline and deliberately staying with the task until it is completed.
4. Good leadership ensures that the people reach their maximum potentials and go beyond their personal limitations. Good leaders must be aware of their personal limitations and make effort to reduce their effects. The essence is to remove the constraining effect of these on the organizational performance and human resource development. A leader is not evaluated on the basis of his personal achievement but on what his subordinates are able to accomplish under his leadership.
5. Good leadership make things happen. When there is a high level of activity or productivity, there is a form of good leadership in place.
6. Good leaders are always behind any good performance, planning, directing, coordinating and controlling in a predetermined manner. Similarly, the qualities of leadership determine quality of the group performance. When the quality of leadership is high the average performance of the group will be high. Good leaders demand high level of performance from the group. In a school system, the human resources available is the teacher.

Teacher and Professional Development Programme

A teacher is that person who has the knowledge about teaching and learning principles. A teacher is a professional with pedagogical skills, values, knowledge and competencies. He or she is a person who helps students to learn how to learn. A teacher is one who can translate knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, culture of the people with certain pedagogical principles. Unqualified teachers are more in number than qualified teachers in most schools in Nigeria. What could be found in some of the public and private schools are cheaters because they cannot

teach in schools with the basic and fundamental professional principles within any instructional process (Ibe-Bassey in Nwalado 2018).

According to Ezoem in Nwalado (2018), a teacher is a person engaged in interactive behaviour with one or more students for the purpose of effecting a change in these students. That is, a teacher is one who interacts with students with the purpose of bringing a change in his behaviour. Ireyefoju in Nwalado (2018), sees a teacher as one who teaches skills, facts and values that aid the development of the society. That is, a person trained and educated in the skills and culture of a people. The teacher passes on the ethics, moral, religion of a people to the young one. Thus, a teacher is one who uses education as an instrument to bring about the development of the individuals and the society.

In whatever way a teacher is viewed, a teacher should be seen as one who knows the subject-matter, the methodology, instructional resources, buildings and equipment in teaching-learning process must depend on the needs of the student. Thus, a teacher is one who helps the students to learn how to acquire knowledge, values, competencies and skills for their development and that of the society. According to Ibe-Bassey in Nwalado (2018), a teacher is a mediator, manager of instruction, planner of instruction, disciplinarian (controller of student's behaviour), and confidant of student, parent substitute, and judge of achievement, scholar/research specialist and curriculum implementer. In order to sustain the above qualities and responsibilities of a teacher, there must be need for continuous training and developments of teacher, this can only be achieved through an effective and dynamic leadership.

There is need for teachers to be regularly updated and developed continually in order to better their professional capabilities as regards instructional delivery in their subject knowledge (Ajani 2018). The development of teachers can be ensured through constant in-service training and professional development. In-service training, according to Amadi (2014) is defined as workshop experiences for employed professionals, paraprofessionals and other practitioners to acquire new knowledge and better methods for improving their skills toward more effective, efficient and competency in service delivery. Dessler (2015) described in-service training as measures for teaching current employees the basic skills they need to perform their jobs or a given task successfully. Amoah-Mensah and Darkwa (2016) viewed in-service training as the formal and systematic modification of behaviour through learning and re-training which occurs as a result of education, instruction, development and planned experience. Fejoh and Faniran (2016) noted that workers' in-service trainings are essential activities that contribute significantly to the overall effectiveness and productivity of organization. According to Nmadu and Khalil (2017), human resource training is considered as one of the good techniques for improving personnel skills and retaining competent human capital that will improve organizations efficiency and effectiveness. The effectiveness and success of education depends on the quality of people who form the workforce and work

within the school (Onuka, 2006). It is the developed human capital; that is the teachers and other personnel in the school that constitutes its performance. It is therefore believed that teachers' performance and productivity in respect of achieving school goals and successes is a function of the quantum of the relevant in-service training skill and professional development programmes made available to the teachers by the leader. Teachers` professional development is more encompassing than in-service training as the former involves evaluation. Professional development of the teachers is very crucial because, the performance of the school depends on the competence of the teachers. Professional development of teachers according to Amadi (2014) encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities provided by the institution leadership such as acquisition of higher degrees in subject area or other areas relevant to the profession. It refers to programmes designed to upgrade the skills and knowledge for career advancement of the teachers. Ajani (2018) noted that professional development of teachers helps them to acquire relevant and new skills, ideas, knowledge to develop teaching and learning of their subjects. In their views, Awogbami, Opele and Adeoye (2021) shared that professional development programmes help staff understand their responsibilities towards attainment of the goals, mission and vision statement which help to improve the quality-of-service delivery and enable individuals to grow professionally. The core principles of professional development of teachers as highlighted by American Federation of Teachers (1995) in Igbodo and Nwalado (2022) include: (i) depth of content knowledge, (ii) provide a strong foundation in the pedagogy of particular disciplines, (iii) provide more general knowledge about teaching and learning processes, and about schools and institutions, (iv) reflect the best available research, (v) contribute to measurable achievements in student learning, (vi) expect teachers to be intellectually engaged with ideas and resources, and (vii) provide sufficient resources to enable teachers to master new content and pedagogy.

It is imperative to note from the foregoing that teachers cannot rely solely on the entry knowledge they started their career with, hence, they need to experience career growth like other professions through in-service training and professional development programmes. Fejoh and Faniran (2016) ascertained that the main objective of school management is to improve the performance but this can never be achieved without the efficient performance of teachers. This is because the performance of the teachers is essential for the success of the school and educational sector of the nation. It takes a dynamic and effective leader to put measures in place towards the development of the teachers. When teachers are professional developed in schools, the leadership of the institution, achieve huge administrative and academic success. These teachers can be found in schools such as primary, secondary and Colleges of Education.

Concept of Colleges of Education

The concept of Colleges of Education occupies a strategic position within Nigeria's tertiary education setting, serving as vital institutions for the training and professional development of teachers, especially for basic and secondary education levels. These institutions are specifically designed to produce qualified educators who are pedagogically competent, morally sound, and adequately prepared to contribute meaningfully to national development through effective teaching and learning

Colleges of Education in Nigeria operate primarily to offer the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), which is the minimum qualification for teaching in the nation's primary and junior secondary schools, as stipulated by the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014). These institutions were established in response to the growing need for trained teachers and to address the shortage of qualified personnel in the education sector, particularly after Nigeria's independence. They are regulated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), which ensures uniformity in quality, curriculum implementation, and standardization across federal, state-, and privately-owned colleges.

According to Osokoya (2020), Colleges of Education play a dual role: they serve as centers of academic instruction and also as incubators of moral, social, and professional values for future teachers. These colleges adopt both theoretical and practical approaches to teacher education, integrating teaching practice, educational psychology, curriculum studies, and subject-matter specialization to ensure holistic training. The structure of the NCE programme usually spans three years, after which graduates may proceed to universities for a Bachelor's degree in Education through Direct Entry. The concept of Colleges of Education in Nigeria is rooted in the need to provide specialized teacher education that goes beyond general academic training. These colleges typically offer the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), which is the minimum qualification for teaching in primary and junior secondary schools, as mandated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2021).

The NCE programme is structured to integrate both theoretical and practical elements of teaching and learning, emphasizing pedagogy, subject content mastery, and teaching practice. Colleges of Education also serve as feeder institutions for higher degrees in education, such as the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed. or B.Sc. (Ed), B. A (Ed) as the case may be), thereby playing a continuous role in the professional development of teachers.

Furthermore, the role of these institutions extends beyond teacher training to include educational research, community development, and innovation in curriculum delivery. According to Okoli and Ekpo (2023), Colleges of Education in Nigeria are increasingly being repositioned as research-driven institutions that contribute to solving educational challenges in local communities, particularly in areas like early childhood education, special needs education, and adult literacy. In a study by Adepoju and Oyewole in Awogbami, et al. (2021), the authors assert that the

relevance of Colleges of Education lies in their responsiveness to national educational goals, especially those targeting Universal Basic Education (UBE). The colleges are charged with producing teachers who can adapt to the challenges of modern classroom instruction, including the integration of technology and inclusive education practices. Moreover, the evolution of Colleges of Education has seen the emergence of specialized colleges focusing on technical, agricultural, and vocational education, as well as the introduction of professional development programmes for in-service teachers. These transformations are consistent with global trends in teacher education, emphasizing quality, relevance, and the application of 21st-century teaching competencies.

In recent years, Colleges of Education have been expanding their scope to include the use of technology in pedagogy, inclusive education, and entrepreneurship education in line with global best practices and Nigeria's current educational needs. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) has revised the NCE minimum standards to incorporate 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and collaborative learning (NCCE, 2020). These changes reflect an awareness of the evolving demands of the teaching profession and the necessity to equip future teachers with tools to adapt to diverse learning environments.

Despite their importance, Colleges of Education in Nigeria face several challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, low enrolment due to perceived inferiority compared to universities, and limited career progression for NCE holders. Nonetheless, efforts are being made to reposition these institutions for greater impact, including upgrading some into degree-awarding institutions dual mandate sign into operation in 2024 which mandated all Federal College of Education to awarding degree. This upgrade is taking effects in 2025/2026 academic session as stated by the Minister of Education, Dr Morufu Olatunji Alausa in 2025. Scholars like Eze and Akinola (2023) emphasize the urgent need for government intervention and institutional reforms to improve the standard and attractiveness of Colleges of Education as viable pathways for teacher education. Therefore, the concept of Colleges of Education is rooted in the national quest for qualitative education and effective teacher training. Their continued relevance is underscored by the critical need for competent and committed teachers in the Nigerian education system. The leadership of Colleges of Education is referred to as the Provost, who is charged with the responsibilities of running the daily activities of college and answerable to the council to the Minister of Education.

Conclusion

Leadership is the ability to employ managerial competencies to organize performance process by inspiring, igniting, motivating and encouraging teams to meet set instructional goals. A dynamic leader uses different leadership principles, elements and strategies in other to achieve excellence in his/her leadership responsibilities. In other to achieve success in any institution or organisation, a dynamic leadership is inevitable because when a leader is committed, dedicated and

is willing to develop his human resources professionally, such institution will experience growth, in research, instructional delivery and technology. The growth can only take place if the implementers (teachers) are properly trained and developed professionally. The leadership in Colleges of Education should see teachers' professional development as a priority and should be taking seriously if the goal of the institution must be adequately achieved because no institution can grow above the level of knowledge of her teachers (implementers).

Policy Way Forward

The following suggestions are made for leadership in Colleges of Education:

1. Leadership in Colleges of Education should be objective and fair in their approach to delegation of responsibility in their institutions because if sentiment is applied to their delegation of responsibility the institution will slow growth.
2. All teachers in the Colleges of Education should be given equal opportunity to benefit from professional teacher development programme designed to grow them academically.
3. Leadership in Colleges of Education should be creative in sourcing for fund that will benefit the institution and staff, because if workers welfare are taken care of, their performance and input will increase and improve.
4. Leadership of Colleges of Education should ensure that there is training and re-training of teachers on technology and pedagogical skills using available resources including human resources appropriately according to the educational priority for competence and for the enhancement of performance.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND EMERGING ISSUES IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving information environment, libraries are undergoing significant transformations in their organizational, technological, and service structures. The transition from physical repositories to dynamic digital and community hubs is redefining the core functions of the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession. Effective leadership has therefore become a critical factor in ensuring libraries remain agile, innovative, and strategically aligned with institutional and community objectives (Ayoung & Mensah, 2023).

The modern LIS leader faces a complex environment characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). The key challenge is balancing traditional library values (access, preservation, service) with the imperative for change driven by technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), big data, and the widespread demand for open access. Leadership in the LIS field must now encompass not only administrative competence but also visionary guidance that supports digital transformation, inclusivity, and sustainability (Bishop & Bruce, 2021).

The current dynamics demand a shift from hierarchical management to distributed, participatory, and adaptive leadership models. These new dynamics involve empowering staff, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and driving technological integration. Simultaneously, leaders must navigate emerging issues that threaten the stability and relevance of the profession, including budget cuts, fierce competition from commercial information providers, and the ethical dilemmas posed by data privacy and algorithmic bias.

Model: The Adaptive LIS Leadership Nexus

This diagram shows that the LIS Leader acts as the central nexus, balancing the demands from three critical internal and external dimensions.

Dimension	Description	Key Leadership Action
I. Internal Dynamics	**Staff and Culture:** Organizational structure, skill gaps, diversity, staff morale, capacity for change.	**Servant/Shared Leadership:** Fostering a culture of continuous learning, professional development, and distributed decision-making.

Dimension	Description	Key Leadership Action
II. External Pressures	**Environment and Stakeholders:** Budget constraints, community needs, technological disruption (AI/Big Data), competition, political climate.	**Strategic/Advocacy Leadership:** Securing resources, navigating political landscapes, and positioning the library as essential to stakeholders.
III. Strategic Imperatives	**Future Vision:** Digital transformation goals, commitment to access/equity, sustainability targets, new service models.	**Transformational Leadership:** Articulating a clear, compelling vision for the library's future and inspiring staff to embrace innovation.

The adaptive LIS Leader in the center successfully integrates these three dimensions by utilizing emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and resilience to drive the library's strategic alignment and ensure its continued relevance in the information ecosystem.

Leadership Dynamics

From Management to Leadership:

The shift from traditional management to transformative leadership in libraries marks a critical paradigm change. While management focuses on maintaining systems and enforcing procedures, leadership seeks to inspire innovation, creativity, and adaptability (Northouse, 2022). Effective library leaders go beyond supervision to create an environment where librarians and staff feel empowered to navigate uncertainty and contribute meaningfully to institutional success. As Okocha and Oyesiku (2020) note, such leadership fosters a culture of innovation and responsiveness to user needs in an era of technological disruption.

Dynamic Skill Sets:

Modern library leaders must possess a diverse skill set that integrates technical expertise with interpersonal and strategic capabilities. Communication, confidence, emotional intelligence, and technological literacy are increasingly essential leadership attributes (Adeleke & Abdullahi, 2022). According to Nkondo et al. (2021), leaders who exhibit adaptability and empathy are better equipped to manage team collaboration and promote service excellence. These competencies allow library leaders to embrace emerging technologies while maintaining staff morale and engagement during organizational change.

Vision and Motivation

Visionary leadership involves articulating a compelling purpose that aligns organizational goals with societal impact. Motivating staff through shared vision and commitment is key to sustaining innovation (Bolden et al., 2019). Library leaders who demonstrate authenticity and enthusiasm tend to cultivate trust and professional growth within their teams. A motivated workforce becomes more resilient, creative, and service-oriented (Babalola, 2020).

Participatory Decision-Making: Participatory leadership fosters inclusivity and collective ownership of organizational goals. By involving staff in planning and decision-making, library leaders build transparency, accountability, and trust (Igbinovia, 2021). Studies show that participatory leadership enhances adaptability during change processes and reduces employee resistance (Boateng, 2020). It also ensures that strategic decisions reflect the diversity of perspectives within library systems.

Emerging Issues in Library Leadership

Technological Integration: The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and automation technologies has redefined library services (Chowdhury, 2023). AI-powered systems assist with cataloguing, metadata generation, and personalized recommendations, improving user experience (Abubakar & Adetimirin, 2021). However, library leaders must manage the ethical, privacy, and data governance challenges that accompany these technologies (Garoufallou et al., 2022).

Digital Transformation.

The digitalization of library services has accelerated due to the proliferation of online learning and remote research environments. Leaders must now champion digital literacy, infrastructure development, and equitable access to online resources (Ayoung & Mensah, 2023). Strategic leadership ensures that digital transformation aligns with institutional missions while supporting inclusivity and lifelong learning (Bishop & Bruce, 2021).

Misinformation and Disinformation: The global rise of misinformation presents new challenges for libraries as trusted information gatekeepers. Library leaders are now tasked with promoting information literacy and critical thinking among users (Fallis, 2021). Effective leadership involves implementing user education programmes that empower patrons to discern credible sources and combat information manipulation (Makori, 2022).

Funding Constraints:

Persistent underfunding continues to undermine library innovation and service delivery, particularly in developing countries (Okocha & Oyesiku, 2020). Leaders must adopt strategic advocacy, public relations, and partnership-building approaches to secure funding. Demonstrating the library's contribution to institutional and societal outcomes is crucial for resource mobilization (Nkondo et al., 2021).

Censorship and Book Bans

Recent increases in book challenges and censorship debates have tested the ethical integrity of library leadership. Defending intellectual freedom and access to information remains a professional obligation (American Library Association [ALA], 2024). Courageous and ethical leadership ensures that libraries remain bastions of free expression and inclusive knowledge (Garoufallou et al., 2022).

Serving Diverse Patron Needs

Libraries now serve increasingly diverse populations, requiring leaders to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles into service delivery (Igbinovia, 2021). Empathetic leadership helps to address the needs of marginalized communities while promoting a culture of belonging. Leaders must ensure that library environments are accessible, safe, and responsive to cultural and demographic diversity (Babalola, 2020).

Strategic Alignment

Library leaders must align their vision with broader institutional and community goals. Strategic alignment enhances the library's visibility and relevance in academic and social ecosystems (Bolden et al., 2019). Engaging in institutional governance and policy-making ensures libraries contribute effectively to teaching, research, and social innovation (Adeleke & Abdullahi, 2022).

Conclusion:

Leadership in library and information science is evolving to meet complex and multidimensional challenges. The modern leader must balance between technological competence, ethical responsibility, and human-centered values. As libraries traverse digital transformation, misinformation, and funding constraints, effective leadership remains the foundation for innovation, adaptability, and sustainable development in the information profession.

Policy Way Forward

1. Libraries should institutionalize leadership training and mentorship programmes to enhance strategic and technological competencies.
2. Library leaders should adopt transformational and participatory leadership models to foster inclusivity, motivation, and resilience.
3. Library leaders should come up with ethical frameworks to guide AI and ML adoption, ensuring privacy and transparency.
4. Library leaders must engage policymakers and partners to diversify funding sources.
5. Leaders should uphold information rights and resist censorship.
6. Libraries must develop information literacy curricula to combat misinformation.
7. Library spaces and services must reflect inclusion and respect for diversity.
8. Strategic participation in institutional governance enhances visibility and sustainability.
9. Ongoing research and collaboration should guide evidence-based leadership in libraries.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

LEADERSHIP STYLES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF BUSINESS EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Introduction

The achievement of any education programme objectives rest upon the harmonious interactions amongst relevant stakeholders. Stakeholders in educational programmes can be classified as internal and external (Abdulkarim, 2022). According to Abdulkarim, internal stakeholders directly influence and are influenced by the programme's implementation and they include the programme's administrator(s), academic staff, non-academic staff, and students; while the external stakeholders are those who indirectly influence the programme through their actions and inactions. The external stakeholders include curriculum planners, supervisory ministry or agency, parents, and the entire host community. At the centre of providing the conducive environment in which both internal and external stakeholders interact harmoniously is the administrator. Hence, the leadership style utilized or practiced by an administrator or a supervisor greatly determines the success of the administrator. Effective administration of Business Education improves performance and high productivity which is directed towards the improvement of teaching and learning. Thus, the administrator can achieve this by influencing the teacher to improve teaching and learning through effective coordination of the programme of the institution, all necessary instructional materials as well as every resource needed for effective teaching and learning. These huge task demands rationale application of different leadership styles.

Leadership is a critical component of business education administration, as it plays a significant role in shaping the direction and success of educational institutions. Effective leadership is essential for creating a positive learning environment, fostering academic excellence, and promoting the overall well-being of students, faculty, and staff. However, leadership in business education administration is not without its challenges.

In recent years, there has been growing concern about the leadership styles and practices in educational institutions, particularly in the context of business education. According to Bush (2018), leadership in educational institutions is complex and challenging, requiring leaders to balance multiple stakeholders' interests, manage limited resources, and adapt to changing environments. Moreover, the rapidly changing nature of the business world demands that educational

leaders be innovative, forward-thinking, and responsive to the needs of the industry. As noted by Hallinger and Heck (2020), effective leadership in educational institutions requires a deep understanding of the organizational context, as well as the ability to build relationships, communicate effectively, and foster a sense of community.

Despite the importance of effective leadership in business education administration, there are several issues and challenges that leaders face. One of the major challenges is the lack of clear direction and vision, which can lead to confusion, ambiguity, and a sense of purposelessness among stakeholders (Kotter, 2021). Additionally, the increasing complexity and uncertainty of the educational environment require leaders to be adaptable, resilient, and able to navigate through ambiguity and change (Fullan, 2017).Another significant challenge facing business education administrators is the need to balance academic and administrative responsibilities. As noted by Bolden et al. (2019), educational leaders are expected to be both academic leaders and managers, which can be a difficult balancing act. This can lead to role conflict, stress, and burnout, ultimately affecting the quality of leadership and the overall performance of the institution.

Furthermore, the leadership style adopted by business education administrators can have a significant impact on the culture and climate of the institution. According to Schein (2020), leadership style can shape the organizational culture, influencing the attitudes, behaviour and values of stakeholders. A leadership style that is autocratic, bureaucratic, or unresponsive can lead to a toxic work environment, low morale, and decreased job satisfaction within the faculty and among staff. In the Nigerian context, the challenges facing business education administrators are even more pronounced. According to Oplatka (2017), Nigerian educational institutions face significant challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and a lack of qualified personnel. To address these challenges, the system requires leaders who will provide the work climate capable of ensuring employees' job performance. The paper addresses the issues and challenges affecting leadership styles for effective teaching of business education and administration. The paper discuss meaning of leadership, Business Education, Business Education Administrators; Functions of Vocational Business Education Administrator, Leadership Styles in Business Education Administration. The paper further discussed the effective Administration of Leadership Styles in Business Education and Issues and Challenges Related to Leadership Style in Business Education.

Leadership

Leadership is very essential for influencing and co-ordinating the behaviours of workers to achieve organizational goals. It is a function of some given personality attributes which is based on notion that on individual's behaviour is partly the product of his personality. Robbins (cited in Alfred, and George 2015:35) sees leadership as "the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of a

vision or set of goals. Leadership might also be interpreted in simple terms such as getting people to follow or getting people to do things willingly or interpreted more specifically for examples, as the use of authority in decision making. It is fundamental in the success of any group and organization. According to Newstrom (2023), Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. Leadership styles are characteristic ways of making decisions and relating to subordinates. The leadership style adopted by an administrator determines the effectiveness of his administration. Baridam (2021) defines leadership as "a process by which one person induces others to work towards some predetermined goals. It is a fascinating exercise that demonstrates clearly that there is no best style. The most appropriate style will depend on the people (their experiences, values, motives) and the situation (stable/changing, new/seasonal team, short/long term focus). The key to being an effective leader is to have a broad repertoire of styles and how to use them appropriately. One of the interesting things about style is that, a leader with the most flexibility in style gets the best outcomes from their people. Leadership style is not about good/ bad, right /wrong: leadership style depends on the task, people and situation to be administered.

According to Oku (2017), leadership can be interpreted as an attribute of an office or position, as characteristics of a person and a category of actual behaviour. As an attribute of an office, teachers have legitimate power over their students just in the same way principals and school heads have formal authority over the teachers. Furthermore, at the classroom level, the teachers leadership influence lies in his duty in making the students obey and compel them to do things that would make the teaching and learning environment conducive for the achievement of instructional objectives.

Business Education

Business education has been defined in different perspectives as noted by different experts in the field. Effah and Okudare (2015) in West (2021), referred to business education as a programme of instruction which consists of two main parts (i) office education which is a vocational education programme for office careers through the initial refresher and upgrading education and (ii) general business education, a programme that provides students with information and competencies which are needed by all to manage personal business affairs and to use the services of business organization. Olagunju (2020) defined business education as a branch of education that involves teaching the skills and operations of the business industry. Amaewhule et al (2019) see business education as education that prepares youth and adult for employment by providing experience which enables them to develop competencies needed in the job. Similarly, business education is defined as a systematic and organized programme of instruction aimed at transmitting knowledge, skills, ideas, attitude and technical know-how to

recipients which is required for usage in business offices and for teaching others (Oxedele & Oladeji, 2016). Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) emphasized business education as a major component of vocational and technical education which offers pre-vocational subject for the preparation of an individual into advance or specific occupation like accounting, secretarial, marketing, office technology, management, data processing and distributive occupation. Business education is an educational process that provides individuals with the business and pedagogical competences necessary for teaching and practicing of business concepts, knowledge and skills for entry into business world as employer or employee and participating as a business teacher (Ubulom & Enyoghasim, 2012). Gidado and Akaeze (2014) viewed business education as "total educational programme that provides the recipient with skills, understanding, knowledge and attitude needed to perform effectively in the world of business as a consumer or producer of goods and services. Buttressing this, Osuala (2014) as cited in Gidado and Akaeze (2014) affirmed business education as a comprehensive area of knowledge that deals with a nation economic system identifies and explains the rate of contentment and business experience that prepare individuals for efficient participation as consumers, workers and citizens.

Business Education Administrators

Business education administrator according to Abdulkarim and Akpan (2018), is one who ensures the effective mobilisation and efficient utilization of human and material resources needed for the realization of fundamental objectives of educational programmes. Abdulkarim (2022) sees business education administrator is seen as one who has the responsibility to effectively manage every aspect of the programme effectively through planning, organizing, coordinating, and implementing the programme's plan using the available human and non-human resources. Rotua (2017) opined that the effectiveness of the Business education programme rests upon the ability of the administrators to motivate subordinates to work with the available resources at their disposal. Otuo (2011) opined that the basic roles of administrators of vocational Business Education should include:

i. Influencing the priorities and duration of the programme.
ii. Outlining the procedures for the attainment of the programme's objectives.
iii. Influencing the job performance of those involved in the implementation of vocational business education curriculum.
iv. Coordinating the various units of the programme for effective job performance.
v. Ensuring the efficient utilization of available resources.
vi. Evaluating the quality of the programme through its products and research outcomes.
vii. Improving the public image of the Business education programme.

Functions of Vocational Business Education Administrator

The functions of business education administrators as a leader as outlined by Abdulkarim and Akpan (2018) to include:

a) ***Decision making function:*** ability to discharge the responsibilities of making effective decisions concerning the input and processes of the programmes. The recruitment of personnel, the purchase of equipment, tools and machines, the award of contracts, and other things that will ensure the smooth running of the programme requires the administrator's decision making.

b) ***Personnel development function:*** To ensure the quality of personnel for the implementation of the programme's curriculum a serious-minded vocational Business Education administrator would develop a model for the purpose of developing the staff irrespective of the apparent or prevailing economic circumstances.

c) ***Promoting peaceful climate function:*** Only through peaceful climate, can the educational programme's objectives be effectively implemented. Therefore, the administrator of the vocational Business education programme has the responsibility of the vocational education administrator to create such a climate. This has implications on the leadership style utilized by the administrator to manage the educational stakeholders (staff and students) in order to ensure proper behaviour.

d) ***Demonstrating work competencies function:*** Vocational business education administrators must be competent in their area of vocation. They must be able demonstrate work competencies in correcting their academic staff, technicians and other supporting staff.

e) ***Community relation and services function:*** The NPE (2014) noted that the administrative machinery for any system of education in the country shall be based on close participation and involvement of the communities, at the local level, in the administration of schools among others. Consequently, vocational Business Education administrators need to look for ways to involve the community in the educational process

Leadership Styles in Business Education Administration

(1) Autocratic/Authoritative Leadership Style

The autocratic or authoritative leadership style emphasis on the distinction of the leader over the follower. Here there is a distinct professional relationship between the leader and the follower. The vision and the direction of the leader becomes the focus of the followers. The authoritative style has the primary objective of providing long-term direction and vision for employees:

- The "firm but fair leader". He is a firm but fair leader
- Gives employees clear direction to follow with little or no contribution from them
- Motivates by persuasion and only gets feedback on task performance by the subordinate.

The authoritative leadership style though unpopular, remains relevant in many situations for example, it can be applied when the workforce display Theory X Behavioural trait: Douglas McGregor's Theory X exposed that workers are inherently lazy and naturally dislike working, in a case such as this, the administrator needs to supervise the worker strictly to ensure they are not slack in their duties.

The Autocratic leader reserves the rights to make decisions for the subordinates to obey strictly without questions. Fredrick W. Taylor, the proponent of the 'Scientific Management' is of the view that human being are motivated by material rewards so they were to be treated and manipulated in a way that will yield maximum benefit in organization in return for money, he therefore uses the autocratic leadership style in his production firm.

Application of Autocratic Leadership Style

(1) It can be used in a situation when subordinates have low motivation or achievement orientation and abscond their duties for others.

(2) In a case where people working in a group feel reluctant to take up responsibility when things go wrong and they lack the inclination to understand the task, then the leader should use the autocratic style since collective or participative decision making in such case, will delay the progress.

(3) When the members of a project team are new or inexperienced and unfamiliar with their role, the leader should utilize the autocratic style to exercise authority over employees.

(4) In a situation where the subordinate lacks necessary qualification, skills or talent, any participative leadership style will cripple goal achievement due to their inexperience; in such a situation, autocratic leadership style should be appropriate.

(5) During an emergency or contingency situation such as processing an unexpected large order within a task line, autocratic style is necessary to save time of argument of rank and file.

(2) Participative Leadership Style

The participative (democratic) style is a leadership style that involves input of the followers in the decision making process. They are given information about the company's objectives and allowed to make contributions and the votes may decide the cause of action it tends to add to a democratic dimension to leadership process. The style has the primary objective of building commitment and consensus among employees.

- They motivates by rewarding team effort.
- Create room for employee's input.

Application of Participative Leadership Style

It can be used when followers are more efficient and creative. This can be opposite to Douglas McGregor's theory X but is supported by theory Y that states that ambitions and self-motivated workers enjoy doing their jobs. They like to seek and accept responsibility and apply their creativity in solving work related problem.

In a democratic leadership style, the supervisor's approach should be flexible and adaptive not rigid. Supervision should enable freedom for teacher's initiative in classroom experimentation, methods and management. Supervision should (include pre-planning observation in the classroom and a follow-up discussion in conference), respect the teacher's professional competence.

(3) Lassie Faire Leadership Style

The Lassie faire leadership is also known as a delegative. This is a leadership style in which the leader hands off and allows group members to make their decisions. Researchers have found that this is generally leadership style with the lowest productivity. Like other leadership style, the delegative has both a number of advantages and disadvantages.

Application of Lassie Faire Leadership Style

This leadership is only effective in a situation where followers are highly skilled, motivated and capable of working on their own, since they are experts, the knowledge & skills to independently work without supervision are possessed by them.

On the other hand, Lassie Faire leadership style is detrimental to be used where followers are inexperienced to handle their task or make decision. Project can go offline and deadline will not be reached. In some situation a Lassie Faire style leads to poorly define roles among the subordinates, since they do not receive guidelines they may not be sure of their roles within the organization. When members are not familiar with their task, they need to take necessary directive from their leader.

(4) Affiliative Leadership Style

The Affiliative leadership style is a leadership style that sees a leader as a promoter of harmony among his followers and works with them to solve problems and conflict, such a leader target team building to make sure his followers feel connected to one another. Most followers praise his leader for using such a style yet poor performances could go unchecked.

Application of Affiliative Leadership Style

In 2002, Daniel Goleman postulated this leadership style and stated that it would be more effective when morale is low because of stress and there would be need for team building. The Affiliated leader is a master at establishing positive relationship and followers will most likely adore him, they will be loyal, would share information and would have high level of trust all of which will create a better office environment which would boost morale and harmony.

This style is often collaborated with visionary leadership and is best used in a stressful circumstance to heal rift. It is all about making the teacher feel good while getting along with the administrator and embracing innovation for the betterment of the institution. It is best for groups or organizations that are highly volatile and needs re-assurance.

A leader can make use of this approach only when necessary and should switch back to their primary authoritative method to prevent poor performance among members. This leadership style is all about the people, hence the leader should try to value the people and their emotions more than the organizations, task and goal which is a big risk for business growth at the bottom line. This means that in this style the people come first before the organizational goal and it only work best when members of staff needs to rebuild the trust of the organization or heal from a trauma. Hence this approach should not be used exclusively since reliance on nurturing and praise can bring lack of direction and mediocre performance.

(5) Coaching Leadership Style

Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard in late 1960 were the first to describe the Coaching leadership style. In 2002 Daniel Goleman documented it as one among the six leadership styles. Coaching leaders clearly define the role and task of followers but seek their input in suggestions as well. Decisions are still made by the leaders but the communication style is truly two ways. The Coaching style has the primary objectives of long-term professional development of subordinates. The Coaching style is the developmental leader. He helps and encourages followers to develop their strength and improve their performance. The Coaching leader motivates by providing opportunities for professional development.

Application of Coaching Leadership Style

Coaching leaders are very effective in situations where performance and results needs improvement, they help others build their skills and strength and provide a lot of guidance. This style should not be used in a situation of crisis and when the followers have high expertise or when the leader lack high expertise.

(6) Pacesetting Leadership Style

The pacesetting leadership style is a setting where the leader sets both high standards for themselves and the subordinates. One of the key examples is "Do as I do now". The leader leads by example, they don't ask their followers to do anything they themselves won't. This style is able to quickly achieve business result in a short time with outstanding performance in terms of accomplishing task as well as quality of work itself. Pacesetters don't give employee a lot of positive feedback, they simply don't have time, they don't have problem with hijacking activities/tasks they feel followers are taking slowly.

Application of Pacesetting Leadership Style

Most effective way of using Pacesetting style is when a department needs a quick result from a group that is highly competent in their task, they are now encouraged to achieve result faster since there is no or little time for on-the-job-learning.

Effective Administration of Leadership Styles in Business Education

Looking at the different leadership styles and effective administration of business education, whether Business Education programme is headed by a director, a supervisor, a consultant, Head of Department and by other personnel, as well as students versus teachers relationship. The success of such programme depends largely on the leadership style of the person in charge. Thus for a business education programme to be successful, the administrator should be skilled to use the different leadership styles to foster business education which will enable him/her secure the co-operation of the teacher, the administration, the students and the business community. Abdulkarim (2022) noted that the attainment of Business Education objectives rests upon the effectiveness with which the administrator provides the conducive environment for stakeholders' operations. Supporting this fact, Rotua (2017) opined that the effectiveness of a Business education programme rests upon the ability of the administrators to motivate stakeholders to discharge their responsibilities within the available resources. Otuo (2011) noted that the official responsibilities of vocational Business Education administrators may include: influencing the priorities and duration of the programme; outlining the procedures for attaining the programme's objectives; influencing the job performance of those involved in the implementation of vocational business education curriculum; coordinating the various units of the programme for effective job performance; ensuring the efficient utilization of available resources; evaluating the quality of the programme through its products and research outcomes; and improving the public image of Business Education programme. Webber (2016) opined that educational administrators in performing their functions need to provide the right leadership which can stimulate positive attitude from other stakeholders if they must perform effectively.

The need for Business Education administrators to provide the right leadership is to be able to stimulate the work climate required for achieving the programme's goals. This is because the work climate as defined by Veyrat (2021) is the perceptions individual employees have about their work environment which influence the motivation and behaviour at work. Similarly, Cyrus (2022) defined work climate as the perceived nature of the workplace environment by the employees. Consequently, the perception created by the employees goes a long way to affect their psyche on how fit their working environment is, for the attainment of work objectives. Taking this into consideration, it behoves Business Education administrators to use their leadership capability to stimulate a positive work climate that motivates employees to perform better. The different leadership

style is targeted towards enhancing and improving an effective teaching and learning in schools. This directs the attention towards the fundamentals of Business Education and the improvement of teaching and learning within the general aims of Business Education. These aims are teaching and learning processes, improving settings for learning, enabling the teachers improve in their performance as well as to identify and co-ordinate the human efforts and resources available for more efficient impact.

Issues and Challenges Related to Leadership Style in Business Education

Leadership style is a critical aspect of business education, as it can significantly impact the effectiveness of educational institutions. Effective leadership can promote a positive work culture, improve employee morale, and enhance student outcomes (Bass, 2015). However, ineffective leadership can lead to low employee morale, poor student outcomes, and a lack of innovation (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). One of the primary issues related to leadership style in business education includes the following:

Autocratic vs. democratic leadership debate: Autocratic leadership can lead to a lack of creativity and innovation, as employees may feel micromanaged and undervalued (Bennis, 2023). On the other hand, democratic leadership can promote collaboration and employee engagement, as employees feel valued and involved in the decision-making process (Gastil, 2024).According to Burns (2018), leadership is not just about authority, but about inspiring and motivating followers to achieve a shared vision.

Lack of Vision and Strategic Planning: A leader without a clear vision and strategic plan can lead to confusion, lack of direction, and stagnation in business education institutions. Effective leaders need to have a clear understanding of the institution's mission, vision, and goals, and be able to communicate these to stakeholders (Kotter, 2021). A lack of vision and strategic planning can lead to poor decision-making, inefficient use of resources, and a lack of innovation.According to Mintzberg (2024), strategic planning is a critical component of effective leadership, as it enables leaders to think critically about the future and make informed decisions. Leaders who fail to develop a clear vision and strategic plan can miss opportunities, fail to adapt to changing circumstances, and struggle to motivate and engage stakeholders.

Inability to empower staff: Leaders who fail to empower staff can stifle creativity, innovation, and productivity in business education institutions. Empowerment involves giving staff the autonomy to make decisions, take risks, and develop their skills and abilities (Conger & Kanungo, 2018). When staff is empowered, they are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and committed to the institution's mission and goals.However, leaders who micromanage and fail to delegate responsibilities can undermine staff empowerment. According to Spreitzer (2015), empowerment is critical to employee motivation and satisfaction, as it enables employees to feel valued, trusted, and respected. Leaders who empower

staff can promote a positive work culture, improve employee morale, and enhance institutional performance.

Poor Communication and Interpersonal Skills: Leaders with poor communication and interpersonal skills can create conflict, mistrust, and confusion in business education institutions. Effective communication involves being able to articulate a clear vision, provide feedback, and listen to stakeholders (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Leaders who fail to communicate effectively can misunderstand the needs and concerns of stakeholders, leading to poor decision-making and conflict. According to DeVito (2013), interpersonal skills are critical to effective leadership, as they enable leaders to build strong relationships, manage conflict, and communicate effectively. Leaders who possess strong interpersonal skills can promote a positive work culture, build trust, and enhance collaboration and teamwork.

Lack of Emotional Intelligence: Another issue related to leadership style in business education is the lack of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others (Goleman, 2015). Leaders with low emotional intelligence may struggle to manage their emotions and the emotions of others, leading to conflicts and poor relationships (Goleman, 2015). Furthermore, leaders who are resistant to change can hinder innovation and progress in business education institutions (Kotter, 2018). In today's fast-paced business environment, leaders need to be adaptable and open to new ideas and perspectives (Senge, 2016).According to Senge (2016), leaders need to be able to think systemically, recognizing the interdependencies and complexities of the organization. This requires a high degree of emotional intelligence, as well as the ability to communicate effectively and build strong relationships (Goleman, 2015).

Conclusion

Leadership is the life wire of every organization because they direct the use of both human and material organization resources at achieving the desired objectives. Leadership success in the administration of business education depends on his level of training, Leadership traits and his reward and punishment powers. Subordinates will be effective and efficient in their performance when they are trained, well administered and rewarded equitably. One interesting fact about leadership style is that leaders with the best flexibility in style get the best outcome. Leadership style is not about commending a particular style as the best and condemning others rather, leadership style depends on the task, the resources available and the situation to be tackled at the moment. Hence, to achieve effectiveness in administration of Business Education (teaching and learning), the leadership style should be dynamic and democratic to harness the different categories of people and resources that are involved in the educational process in order to achieve the success in the design of educational programmes. This is in line

with the basics of effectiveness in school supervision which should be democratic and aimed at improvement of classroom instruction through the continual growth of all the individuals (students, supervisors and teachers). The leader should be abreast with all the leadership style and apply them where and when necessary to achieve effectiveness in business education. To achieve effectiveness in business education, it is necessary to be equipped with various leadership styles. The most appropriate should be utilized where necessary. The delivery of business education should include variety of strategies designed to increase the rigors and relevance of the curriculum to enable the students connect their learning to a work-based situation as well as business lifestyle. Since business education occurs at different level of learning: elementary, secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education; appropriate leadership style should be used commensurately to the needs and the stages of development of the learner. There should be good leader/ subordinate relationship to ensure effective administration of business education programme.

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CHAPTER FORTY

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND JOB SATISFACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA AND INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

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Introduction

Leadership is a multifaceted phenomenon that plays a pivotal role in shaping the culture and productivity of tertiary institutions. Effective leadership is crucial for driving academic excellence, fostering innovation, and promoting job satisfaction among staff. Leadership is about influencing, motivating, and inspiring others to achieve a shared vision. It involves setting clear goals, empowering teams, and creating an environment conducive to growth and success. In tertiary institutions, leadership dynamics involve interactions between management, staff, and students. The main aspects leadership dynamics include:

1. *Vision-setting;* Leaders articulate a compelling vision that aligns with the institution's mission.
2. *Communication;* Open, transparent communication fosters trust and collaboration.
3. *Empowerment;* Delegating responsibilities and providing resources enhances staff autonomy and job satisfaction.

Good leadership in tertiary institutions have many benefits:

1. *Promotes academic freedom;* Encourages innovation and critical thinking.
2. *Fosters inclusivity;* Values diversity and promotes equity.
3. *Supports staff development;* Provides opportunities for growth and professional development.

Effective leadership significantly impacts job satisfaction among staff in tertiary institutions in the following ways:

1. *Autonomy and recognition;* Leaders who empower staff and recognize their contributions enhance job satisfaction.
2. *Supportive environment;* Leaders who foster a positive work environment reduce stress and increase satisfaction.
3. *Clear communication;* Transparent communication about expectations and feedback promotes a sense of security and satisfaction.

Higher education institutions worldwide face challenges in leadership and job satisfaction, impacting academic excellence and institutional reputation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Nigeria's tertiary institutions grapple with unique contextual issues, including funding, infrastructure, and governance (Adebayo, 2018). Leadership dynamics play an important role in shaping the academic environment, influencing staff satisfaction, and driving institutional success.

Effective leadership in higher education involves maneuvering complex stakeholder relationships, managing resource constraints, and fostering a culture of innovation and academic freedom. In Nigeria, leadership challenges are compounded by factors like inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and sometimes contentious industrial relations (Akinyemi & Adewale, 2014). These challenges underscore the need for leadership approaches that prioritize stakeholder engagement, transparency, and adaptability. Internationally, institutions like Harvard, Oxford, and the University of Toronto exemplify effective leadership practices that drive job satisfaction and institutional success (Bolden, 2011; Shattock, 2013). This article compares leadership dynamics and job satisfaction in Nigerian tertiary institutions with international best practices, highlighting strategies for improvement and contextual adaptation. The study also examines the role of technology, globalization, and changing student demographics in shaping leadership dynamics and job satisfaction in higher education.

Leadership Dynamics in Tertiary Institutions: Nigerian Context

1. Nigerian universities, polytechnics and colleges of education operate under a complexioned governance structure, with oversight from the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and institutional autonomy (Ogbogu, 2011). This dual structure can create tension between regulatory compliance and academic freedom.
2. Leadership challenges in Nigeria tertiary institutions include inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and industrial relations issues (Akinyemi & Adewale, 2014). Leaders must navigate these challenges while promoting academic excellence.
3. Leadership styles in Nigerian tertiary institutions include transactional and transformational approaches, with varying impacts on job satisfaction (Obiwuru et al., 2011). Effective leaders balance academic freedom with administrative accountability.
4. Nigerian tertiary institutions often struggle with succession planning, leadership development, and talent management (Adebayo, 2018). These challenges hinder institutional growth and sustainability.
5. The role of technology in enhancing leadership dynamics and job satisfaction is underexplored in Nigerian institutions (OECD, 2020). Leaders must leverage technology to improve communication, collaboration, and decision-making.

International Best Practices

1. ***Distributed Leadership:*** Universities like Harvard and Oxford adopt distributed leadership, empowering faculties and staff, enhancing collaboration and satisfaction (Bolden, 2011). This approach fosters shared responsibility, innovation, and collective ownership.
2. ***Transformational Leadership:*** Leaders focusing on vision, inspiration, and innovation drive job satisfaction and institutional success (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Examples include University of California, Berkeley, and University of Toronto, where leaders prioritize strategic goals and faculty development.
3. ***Participative Governance:*** Involving stakeholders in decision-making boosts engagement and satisfaction (e.g., universities in UK, Australia; Shattock, 2013). This approach enhances transparency, accountability, and institutional buy-in.
4. ***Leadership Development Programmes:*** Institutions like Stanford and MIT offer leadership development programmes, enhancing leaders' skills and competencies (OECD, 2020). These programmes foster leadership capacity and institutional sustainability.
5. ***Internationalization and Collaboration:*** Global partnerships and collaborations enhance leadership dynamics and job satisfaction (Shattock, 2013). Leaders must navigate cultural differences and leverage global opportunities.

Job Satisfaction Determinants

1. *Compensation and Benefits:* Competitive salaries and benefits significantly impact satisfaction (Nigeria vs. OECD countries; OECD, 2020). Nigerian institutions often struggle to match international standards, affecting staff retention and motivation.
2. *Work Environment:* Infrastructure, resources, and collegiality influence satisfaction (Adebayo, 2018). Supportive environments foster productivity, research output, and job satisfaction.
3. *Professional Development:* Opportunities for growth and recognition drive satisfaction globally (Akinyemi & Adewale, 2014). Institutions investing in staff development see higher satisfaction rates and reduced turnover.
4. *Autonomy and Recognition:* Institutions autonomy and recognition of achievements enhance job satisfaction (Hagedorn, 2000). Balancing autonomy with accountability is important for institutional effectiveness.
5. *Work-Life Balance:* Institutions prioritizing work-life balance see higher job satisfaction rates (OECD, 2020). Leaders must promote flexible work arrangements and employee well-being.

Comparative Analysis: Nigeria and International Practices

S/N	Aspect	Nigeria	International Best Practices
1	Leadership Style	often transactional, mixed approaches distributed	transformational (Bolden, 2011; Bass & Riggio, 2006)
2	Compensation	Generally lower, inconsistent	Competitive, performance-linked (OECD, 2020)
3	Work Environment	Resource constraints common	Well-resourced, supportive

			(Adebayo, 2018)
4	Professional Development	Limited opportunities	Regular training, career progression (Akinyemi & Adewale, 2014)
5	Autonomy and Recognition	Limited autonomy, inconsistent recognition	Highland autonomy, regular recognition (Hagedorn, 2000)

Strategies for Improvement in Nigerian Institutions

1. *Adopt Participative Leadership:* Encourage stakeholder involvement in decision-making (Shattock, 2013). Enhance transparency and accountability. These involves establishing stakeholder forums, promoting open communication, and involving staff in decision-making.
2. *Enhance Compensation and Benefits:* Align with industry standards where possible (OECD, 2020). Address salary disparities and benefits. This can be achieved by introducing performances based incentives, and improved staff benefits packages.
3. *Improve Infrastructure:* Invest in conducive work environments (Adebayo, 2018). Upgrade facilities and resources. Additionally, Develop infrastructure plans, allocate resources, and involve stakeholders in prioritization.
4. *Foster Professional Growth:* Provide training, research opportunities, and recognition (Akinyemi & Adewale, 2014). Support faculty development. Moreso, establish training programmes, offer research grants, and recognize staff achievements.
5. *Promote Transparency and Accountability:* Strengthen governance and industrial relations (Ogbogu, 2011). Address grievances and enhance communication. Additionally, develop clear policies, establish grievance mechanisms, and promote regular communication.

Conclusion

Effective leadership dynamics significantly influence job satisfaction in higher education. Nigerian tertiary institutions can draw lessons from international best practices to enhance leadership, improve job satisfaction, and drive academic excellence. Contextual adaptation of global strategies is key to success. By prioritizing stakeholder engagement, transparency, and accountability, Nigerian institutions can improve leadership dynamics and job satisfaction.

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CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

BEYOND POLICY COMMITMENTS: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND INNOVATION DYNAMICS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

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Introduction

In recent years, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) have gained prominence in academic library discourse, particularly as universities confront questions of representation, access and institutional relevance. Academic libraries increasingly articulate commitments to DEI through policy documents, mission statements, and strategic plans. However, the existence of policy statements does not automatically translate into inclusive leadership practices or innovative organizational cultures. In many contexts, especially within Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa, there remains a noticeable gap between stated commitments and lived institutional realities.

Academic library leadership plays a critical role in determining whether DEI principles are operationalized or remain symbolic. Leaders shape organizational culture, influence resource allocation, and determine whose voices are included in decision-making processes. In African academic institutions, where libraries often operate within constrained funding environments and hierarchical administrative structures, leadership approaches significantly affect staff inclusion, service innovation, and equitable access to information (Eiriemiokhale et al., 2024).

The relevance of DEI to innovation in academic libraries is particularly important. Innovation is frequently discussed in terms of technology adoption, yet inclusive leadership expands the meaning of innovation to include participatory governance, equitable service design, and responsiveness to diverse user communities. Studies in Nigerian academic libraries suggest that when leadership practices emphasize inclusion and fairness, libraries are better positioned to develop services that address the needs of marginalized users and staff groups (Elewode & Alarape, 2025).

Despite growing interest in DEI, empirical research examining how academic library leaders in Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa move beyond policy commitments remains limited. Much of the literature focuses on access to information or service delivery rather than leadership behavior, power relations, and organizational change. This chapter addresses that gap by examining how diversity, equity, and inclusion are enacted through leadership practices and how these practices

influence innovation dynamics in academic libraries. The aim is to analyze DEI in academic library leadership beyond policy rhetoric, with particular attention to Nigeria and the broader Sub-Saharan African context. Specifically, explore how leadership practices shape inclusion, equity, and innovation; identify barriers to DEI-driven leadership; and discuss implications for library leadership practice and future research.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Academic Libraries

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are interrelated but distinct concepts. Diversity generally refers to the presence of differences within an organization, including gender, ethnicity, religion, professional background, and socio-economic status. In Nigerian academic libraries, diversity often manifests through ethno-religious and cultural differences among staff, reflecting broader societal pluralism (Adetayo et al., 2022). Equity goes beyond representation to address fairness in access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making power. Equity-focused leadership recognizes structural inequalities and seeks to correct imbalances through deliberate actions. For academic libraries, this may involve equitable distribution of training opportunities, transparent promotion processes, and inclusive budgeting practices (Bakrin & Liasu, 2025).

Inclusion refers to the extent to which individuals feel valued, heard, and able to participate meaningfully in organizational processes. Inclusion requires leadership practices that encourage participation, respect diverse perspectives, and reduce exclusionary behaviors. Yusuf et al. (2022) argue that inclusion in Nigerian library contexts is essential for addressing the needs of underserved populations and for fostering social responsibility within academic institutions. Together, these concepts provide a framework for examining how leadership practices influence organizational culture and outcomes in academic libraries.

Academic Library Leadership and Organizational Power

Leadership in academic libraries involves more than administrative oversight; it entails the exercise of organizational power that shapes institutional norms and priorities. Leaders influence staff morale, innovation capacity, and service quality through their management styles and decision-making approaches. Anyaoku et al. (2015) demonstrate that leadership style in academic libraries is closely linked to staff job satisfaction and attitudes toward organizational change. In the Nigerian context, academic library leadership often operates within rigid hierarchical structures inherited from broader public-sector governance systems. Such structures can limit participation and reinforce exclusion if leaders do not intentionally adopt inclusive practices (Omotehinse & Akinlade, 2025).

Conversely, leaders who decentralize decision-making and promote collaboration can foster environments that support creativity and innovation. Eiriemiokhale et al. (2024) emphasize that library leaders play a strategic role in positioning libraries for sustainable development. This role includes addressing

equity issues among staff and ensuring that library services align with institutional and societal goals. Leadership, therefore, serves as a critical link between DEI principles and organizational performance.

Innovation in academic libraries is often associated with digital technologies, yet inclusive leadership broadens the concept to encompass organizational processes and service design. Inclusive environments encourage staff to contribute ideas, experiment with new approaches, and respond creatively to user needs. Elewode and Alarape (2025) show that digital collection development initiatives in Nigerian university libraries can promote equity and inclusion when guided by inclusive leadership principles. Adetayo et al. (2022) argue that diversity within library teams, when effectively managed, enhances collaboration and problem-solving. However, diversity alone does not guarantee innovation; leadership practices must create conditions where diverse perspectives are valued and integrated into decision-making processes. DEIdriven leadership thus serves as an enabler of both technological and organizational innovation.

DEI Policy Commitments in Academic Libraries

Across Nigeria and the broader Sub-Saharan African context, many academic libraries articulate commitments to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) through formal policies, strategic plans, and institutional guidelines. These frameworks often align with national educational priorities and global development agendas that emphasize equitable access to information and learning opportunities (Yusuf et al., 2022). While such policies are important in signaling institutional values, they frequently lack detailed implementation strategies, monitoring mechanisms, or accountability structures necessary to ensure sustained organizational impact.

Empirical evidence highlights the limitations of policy-only approaches. Bakrin and Liasu (2025) observe that although some private universities in southwestern Nigeria have established formal structures for budgeting and collection development, the extent of staff participation in these processes varies significantly, reflecting uneven operationalization of DEI principles. Similarly, Omotehinse and Akinlade (2025) report that centralized decision-making and minimal staff involvement constrain the practical management of workforce diversity in Nigerian academic libraries.

A recurring challenge is the symbolic adoption of DEI language without substantive change in organizational practices. Adetayo et al. (2022) further note that, in the absence of intentional leadership intervention, diversity initiatives can inadvertently generate tension rather than foster collaboration and innovation. Collectively, these findings underscore that while DEI policies establish important normative frameworks, their effectiveness depends critically on proactive leadership practices that translate commitments into actionable, inclusive, and measurable outcomes.

Leadership Practices Beyond Policy Commitments

Inclusive Decision-Making and Participatory Governance: Inclusive decision making constitutes a central mechanism through which academic library leaders translate DEI principles into concrete organizational practice. Participatory governance structures enable staff at all levels to contribute meaningfully to budgeting processes, collection development decisions, and strategic planning activities, thereby fostering institutional transparency, shared responsibility, and collective ownership of organizational goals. Bakrin and Liasu (2025) demonstrate that the active involvement of library staff in financial and collection-related decision-making processes enhances both equity and operational accountability. Similarly, Omotehinse and Akinlade (2025) argue that inclusive management practices significantly improve service delivery by leveraging the diverse professional experiences, competencies, and perspectives of library personnel. These findings collectively underscore that leadership's willingness to redistribute authority and engage staff in governance processes is fundamental to moving beyond symbolic policy commitments toward substantive institutional transformation.

Managing Workforce Diversity and Equity: Effective management of workforce diversity requires deliberate and sustained leadership strategies aimed at addressing systemic favoritism, marginalization, and unequal treatment within organizational environments. Adetayo et al. (2022), in their examination of ethno-religious diversity within Nigerian academic libraries, emphasize the importance of fair and impartial leadership practices in fostering intergroup collaboration and organizational cohesion. Moreover, Arubayi and Eruvbedede (2022), although not focused specifically on library institutions, provide compelling evidence that workplace harassment and favoritism significantly undermine staff performance and organizational effectiveness in Nigerian organizations. These findings are highly relevant to academic library contexts, where similar dynamics can erode trust, weaken morale, and stifle innovation if not proactively addressed. Consequently, DEI-driven leadership must incorporate robust conflict resolution mechanisms, equitable performance evaluation systems, and clear accountability frameworks to sustain inclusive organizational cultures.

Gender, Leadership, and Representation: Gender equity remains one of the most persistent challenges confronting academic leadership across the African continent. Mwaura and Balliah (2024) document the systematic underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions and scholarly publishing, attributing these patterns to deeply rooted structural and cultural barriers. In the context of Nigerian academic libraries, Daramola (2025) similarly identifies gender-related leadership constraints and highlights the urgent need for innovative and inclusive leadership approaches. Addressing gender inequities requires far more than the articulation of policy commitments. It demands sustained leadership engagement in mentorship programs, transparent and fair promotion practices, leadership pipeline development for women, and comprehensive

organizational culture change. Without such deliberate interventions, gender disparities will continue to limit institutional performance, innovation potential, and the broader social impact of academic libraries.

DEI and Innovation Dynamics in Academic Libraries

Digital Inclusion and Equitable Access: Digital transformation initiatives offer opportunities to advance equity and inclusion; however, the realization of these opportunities is contingent upon the presence of inclusive and intentional leadership. Digital innovation, when strategically aligned with DEI principles, has the capacity to reduce information inequities and broaden participation in academic life. Elewode and Alarape (2025) demonstrate that the development and management of digital collections in Nigerian universities can substantially promote equitable access to scholarly resources when leadership actively prioritizes the diverse informational needs of users. Furthermore, Yusuf et al. (2022) contend that academic libraries bear a fundamental social responsibility to serve vulnerable and marginalized populations. Digital inclusion strategies, such as accessible interfaces, affordable connectivity solutions, multilingual content provision, and user-centered service models also enable libraries to fulfill this mandate. Consequently, leadership decisions regarding resource allocation, technological investment, and service design become central determinants of whether digital innovation reinforces existing inequalities or functions as a transformative tool for social inclusion.

Organizational Innovation through Inclusive Leadership: Beyond technological advancement, DEI-driven leadership profoundly shapes organizational innovation within academic libraries. Inclusive leadership environments cultivate psychological safety, mutual respect, and collaborative engagement, enabling staff to experiment with new ideas, embrace emerging technologies, and pursue creative problemsolving approaches. Anyaoku et al. (2015) establish a direct relationship between leadership style and staff attitudes toward technological adoption and innovation in academic library settings. In addition, Eiriemiokhale et al. (2024) emphasize thatleadership practices grounded in sustainability and inclusivity enhance institutional adaptability in the face of shifting academic priorities and user expectations. Such leadership models promote continuous learning, cross-functional collaboration, and organizational agility, qualities essential for long-term resilience in knowledge institutions. Collectively, these findings reinforce the central argument of this chapter: that DEI-driven leadership not only strengthens social equity but also serves as a powerful engine of innovation and sustainable organizational growth in academic libraries.

Challenges to Advancing DEI-Driven Leadership

Structural and Institutional Constraints: Academic libraries in Nigeria and the wider Sub-Saharan African context operate within deeply entrenched structural and institutional limitations that significantly constrain the

advancement of DEI-driven leadership. Chronic underfunding, rigid bureaucratic governance structures, and highly centralized decision-making systems restrict leaders' capacity to implement inclusive policies consistently and effectively. Omotehinse and Akinlade (2025) note that these constraints limit leaders' ability to implement inclusive practices consistently. Furthermore, the influence of broader societal inequalities manifested in economic disparities, educational access gaps, and systemic marginalization permeates institutional environments. Yusuf et al. (2022) highlight broader societal inequalities that shape library operations, suggesting that DEI-driven leadership must navigate complex institutional environments.

Cultural and Attitudinal Barriers: Beyond structural limitations, cultural and attitudinal factors present formidable obstacles to inclusive leadership. Deeply embedded social norms, hierarchical traditions, and resistance to organizational change frequently undermine efforts to foster equitable and inclusive work environments. Adetayo et al. (2022) demonstrate that when diversity is not proactively managed, it can intensify workplace tensions, miscommunication, and group polarization, ultimately eroding collaboration and performance. In addition, Arubayi and Eruvbedede (2022) identify favoritism, harassment, and discriminatory workplace practices as persistent features in some institutional cultures, which significantly weaken organizational trust and employee morale. Such conditions not only marginalize vulnerable groups but also discourage open participation and innovation. Overcoming these barriers requires sustained leadership commitment, continuous professional development, and intentional cultural transformation
initiatives that redefine norms, challenge exclusionary practices, and cultivate inclusive organizational values.

Implications for Academic Library Leadership

The foregoing analysis underscores the necessity for academic library leaders to reposition Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as an integral component of everyday leadership practice rather than a peripheral policy obligation. Effective leadership in contemporary academic libraries demands the systematic embedding of DEI principles into governance structures, strategic planning processes, staff development programs, and innovation frameworks. As argued by Eiriemiokhale et al. (2024) and Elewode and Alarape (2025), inclusive leadership practices enhance organizational responsiveness, staff engagement, and service relevance in rapidly evolving academic environments.

Library leaders must therefore operationalize inclusion through participatory decision-making models, transparent performance evaluation systems, equitable talent management practices, and continuous professional learning opportunities. Such approaches not only promote fairness and representation but also strengthen institutional capacity for innovation by leveraging diverse perspectives and expertise.

Equally critical is the need for a robust body of empirical, African-centered scholarship on DEI-driven leadership in academic libraries. Existing literature remains disproportionately Western-centric, limiting its contextual relevance to African higher education systems. Future research should prioritize in-depth investigations into leadership behaviors, organizational power relations, institutional cultures, and their relationship with innovation outcomes across diverse African academic library settings (Mwaura & Balliah, 2024; Yusuf et al., 2022). This evidence base is essential for developing contextually grounded leadership models that advance both social.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in academic libraries cannot be realized through policy commitments alone. Leadership practices are the critical mechanism by which DEI principles are operationalized, shaping organizational culture, staff engagement, and the capacity for innovation. Evidence from Nigeria and the broader Sub-Saharan African context illustrates that inclusive leadership fosters participatory decision-making, equitable access to information, and the development of innovative services responsive to diverse user needs. Despite persistent structural and cultural barriers, including limited resources, entrenched hierarchies, and attitudinal resistance; academic library leaders have tangible opportunities to advance DEI beyond symbolic compliance. By adopting participatory governance, implementing equitable workforce management strategies, and aligning innovation initiatives with DEI objectives, leaders can create institutional environments that are both inclusive and adaptive. Ultimately, DEI-driven leadership is not merely an ethical imperative but a strategic necessity. It ensures that academic libraries remain relevant, resilient, and socially accountable within African higher education systems, capable of addressing the complex informational and scholarly needs of increasingly diverse academic communities.

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CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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Introduction

Educational leadership today is shaped by the need to handle diversity, equity, and inclusion in the education sector. Students now come from many different backgrounds, including culture, language, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, and learning abilities. This diversity means leaders are not expected to focus only on managing schools; they must lead in ways that are fair, ethical, and help all students succeed. Diversity alone does not guarantee fairness or equal opportunity. Without careful leadership, students from disadvantaged groups may still face lower expectations, unequal participation, and exclusion (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2022). Leaders are expected to treat diversity as a resource, using it to improve teaching, learning, staffing, and school policies. Research shows that schools with leaders who understand and respect diversity have better student engagement, stronger school culture, and lower dropout rates (Mette et al, 2023). Leadership tends to determines whether diversity becomes a strength or a problem in schools.

Equity is also key to good educational leadership. Treating all students the same is not enough because they start with different challenges. Equity means giving extra support to those who need it, using data to find gaps, and planning programmes to help disadvantaged learners succeed. Equity-focused leaders also value students' cultural and personal strengths instead of focusing only on weaknesses. Inclusion is the practical result of diversity and equity. It means creating learning spaces where all students feel they belong, can participate, and are supported to succeed (Richard & Cosner, 2024).

Inclusive leadership improves learning, student well-being, and school relationships, but many leaders tend to struggle due to limited training, policies, or resistance to change. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) focused leadership is most probably essential for fair education, better learning outcomes, and strong schools.

Conceptual Clarification of Educational Leadership, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Clear understanding of educational leadership, diversity, equity, and inclusion in multicultural society is essential for effective practice in modern educational institutions. These concepts tend to guide leadership decisions, influence policy implementation, and shape learning environments. Presenting each concept in simple and clear terms can helps educational leaders translate theory into practice.

Educational Leadership

Educational Leadership refers to the ability to guide, influence, and shape teaching, learning, and the overall functioning of educational institutions to achieve clearly defined goals. It involves setting a vision for the school or institution, making ethical and informed decisions, supporting teachers, and creating an environment where students can learn effectively (Leithwood et al, 2023). Educational leadership is not limited to those in formal administrative roles; it also includes the actions of individuals who influence school culture, instructional practices, and the overall learning climate (Assefa, 2025). Leaders in education are expected to foster collaboration, encourage professional growth among staff, and ensure that institutional processes are designed to enhance student outcomes. Modern studies describe educational leadership as a dynamic and responsive process that adapts to social changes, technological advancements, and evolving learner needs, with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of education and ensuring that all students achieve their full potential.

In the era of diversity, equity, and inclusion, educational leadership takes on even greater significance. Leaders are expected to actively address inequalities, close achievement gaps, and ensure that every student has access to equal opportunities regardless of their background, ability, or social circumstances (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2023). This requires awareness of the diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors that affect learning, as well as the ability to implement policies and practices that promote fairness and inclusivity. Equity-focused educational leadership emphasizes the creation of supportive learning environments where students feel valued and empowered to succeed. Research shows that schools led by leaders who prioritize equity and inclusion are more likely to experience higher student engagement, better academic outcomes, and stronger institutional cultures that foster collaboration, respect, and social justice.

Diversity

Diversity in education refers to the presence of differences among learners, teachers, and other members of the school community. These differences may relate to culture, language, gender, religion, socioeconomic background, disability, or learning abilities (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2023). Diversity describes who is present in the educational setting and highlights the variety of identities, experiences, and perspectives within the learning environment. Scholars emphasize that diverse classrooms can enrich learning by exposing students to multiple

viewpoints, promoting critical thinking, and preparing learners for interaction in complex and multicultural societies. When effectively embraced, diversity encourages collaboration, broadens understanding, and helps learners develop social and cognitive skills necessary for success in diverse contexts (Zhao, Wider, Jiang, Fauzi, Tanucan, Lin & Udang, 2024).

However, diversity alone does not guarantee equity, inclusion, or fairness. Without intentional leadership and supportive policies, diverse learning environments may still experience exclusion, discrimination, and unequal academic outcomes. Learners from minority or disadvantaged backgrounds often face barriers such as low expectations, cultural misunderstandings, and limited access to academic and social support (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2023). Educational leaders must therefore actively manage diversity by creating inclusive policies, fostering equitable classroom practices, and ensuring that all learners can participate fully. Research shows that institutions where leaders prioritize diversity and inclusion are more likely to achieve positive academic outcomes, higher engagement, and stronger school cultures that value all members equally.

Equity

Equity in education refers to fairness in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and support to learners, ensuring that all students have what they need to succeed. Unlike equality, which provides the same resources or treatment to everyone, equity recognizes that learners start from different positions and face diverse challenges (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2023). Some students may require additional support due to socioeconomic disadvantage, learning differences, or limited access to educational materials. Equity ensures that interventions are tailored to address these disparities, enabling all learners to achieve comparable outcomes. Research shows that differences in school funding, teacher quality, and access to learning resources have a direct impact on student performance, making equity essential for promoting fairness and inclusion in education.

Equity-oriented educational leadership involves using evidence and data to identify learning gaps, allocate resources strategically, and implement targeted interventions that remove barriers to success. Leaders are expected to design policies and practices that prioritize students who are at a disadvantage while maintaining high expectations for all learners. Empirical studies indicate that schools led by equity-focused leaders demonstrate improved academic achievement, higher attendance, and better retention rates, particularly for marginalized students (Richard & Cosner, 2024). Equity thus serves as a practical framework guiding educational leadership decisions, ensuring that fairness and social justice are central to teaching, learning, and institutional development.

Inclusion

Inclusion in education refers to creating learning environments where all students feel accepted, valued, and actively engaged in educational activities.

Inclusion goes beyond simply providing physical access to schools; it emphasizes meaningful participation, a sense of belonging, and equitable engagement in learning experiences. Inclusive education requires teaching methods, curriculum content, and assessment practices that accommodate diverse learning needs without discrimination. Scholars note that inclusion is a key indicator of educational quality and effectiveness, as it ensures that every learner can contribute, interact, and achieve their potential (Leithwood et al, 2023). Inclusive practices also enhance collaboration among students, foster empathy, and prepare learners for engagement in diverse societies.

Inclusive educational leadership focuses on building school cultures that respect differences and actively support the success of all learners. Leaders promote inclusion by encouraging collaborative teaching practices, providing professional development for educators, and ensuring that institutional policies reflect respect for diversity and equity. Research demonstrates that inclusive leadership improves student engagement, academic performance, emotional well-being, and overall satisfaction with the learning environment. Inclusion is therefore the practical outcome of effective diversity and equity practices, relying on sustained leadership commitment, supportive policies, and the continuous reinforcement of inclusive values within educational institutions.

Evolution of Educational Leadership in Diverse Learning Contexts

Educational leadership has undergone significant changes over time, evolving from traditional administrative models to approaches that emphasize learning, inclusion, and equity. Understanding this evolution is critical for appreciating how leaders today respond to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in schools and higher institutions. The evolution can be explored through the following subtopics:

i. ***Traditional Administrative Leadership***: Early educational leadership focused mainly on administrative control, maintaining discipline, and enforcing rules. Leaders were expected to manage staff, maintain order, and ensure compliance with regulations, with little attention to student learning or inclusivity. Success was measured through adherence to policy rather than improvements in teaching, learning, or equity. In this model, diversity and inclusion were rarely considered, and leadership was largely hierarchical, with decision-making concentrated at the top.

ii. ***Transformational Leadership***: As societies became more complex, leadership models shifted toward transformational approaches, which emphasize vision, motivation, and inspiration. Transformational leaders focus on improving teaching and learning outcomes, fostering collaboration among staff, and creating positive school cultures. This approach marked the beginning of leadership that recognized the importance of human development, innovation, and responsiveness to student needs.

iii. ***Distributed and Collaborative Leadership:*** Leadership responsibilities began to be shared across multiple stakeholders in schools, giving rise to distributed or collaborative leadership. Teachers, administrators, and even students were recognized as contributors to decision-making processes (Assefa, 2025). This model is particularly relevant in diverse learning contexts, as it allows leaders to harness multiple perspectives, encourage collective responsibility, and address the needs of learners from varied backgrounds.

iv. ***Culturally Responsive Leadership:*** With increasing cultural and demographic diversity, educational leadership evolved further into culturally responsive leadership. Leaders are expected to understand students' cultural, linguistic, and social contexts and adapt policies and instructional practices accordingly (Zhao et al, 2024). This approach emphasizes equity, inclusion,/ and social justice, requiring leaders to actively remove barriers to learning and promote fair opportunities for all students.

v. ***Data-Informed and Technology-Driven Leadership:*** Modern educational leadership increasingly relies on data and technology to make evidence-based decisions, monitor learning outcomes, and improve resource allocation (Richard & Cosner, 2024). Leaders use digital tools to track student performance, identify learning gaps, and implement interventions tailored to diverse learners. Technology also allows for wider access to learning resources, supporting equitable participation in increasingly complex and multicultural learning environments.

Leadership Roles in Advancing Diversity in Education

Educational leaders are central to advancing diversity in schools and higher institutions. Their role extends beyond acknowledging differences among learners to actively designing systems, policies, and practices that value and leverage those differences. The following sub-topics explain how leaders promote diversity in educational contexts:

i. ***Curriculum and Pedagogy Design:*** Educational leaders play a key role in ensuring that curricula reflect diverse perspectives, experiences, and cultural knowledge. This includes designing teaching and learning materials that are representative of different ethnic, cultural, and social groups. Leaders also guide teachers in adopting inclusive instructional strategies, such as differentiated learning and culturally responsive teaching. Research shows that when curricula and pedagogy are inclusive, learners from marginalized backgrounds feel represented, which increases engagement, motivation, and academic achievement (Dhakal, 2024). Leadership in this area ensures that diversity becomes an educational advantage rather than a challenge.

ii. ***Professional Development of Teachers:*** Leaders are responsible for providing continuous professional development to equip teachers with skills to handle diverse classrooms effectively. Training programs focus on culturally responsive teaching,

anti-bias education, differentiated instruction, and strategies for inclusive assessment. By improving teachers' capacity to respond to learner differences, leaders ensure that diversity in the classroom translates into equitable learning experiences. Studies highlight that schools with strong teacher support in diversity management report improved learner outcomes and higher teacher satisfaction (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2023).

iii. ***Policy and Institutional Practices:*** Promoting diversity also requires leadership in institutional policies and practices. Leaders influence recruitment strategies to ensure staff representation from different cultural and social backgrounds. They establish equitable access to leadership and professional growth opportunities within the institution. Additionally, leaders develop policies that allow students and staff from diverse backgrounds to participate in decision-making processes. Research indicates that inclusive institutional policies enhance learners' sense of belonging and promote fair treatment for all members of the school community (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2022).

iv. ***Advocacy and Community Engagement:*** Educational leaders serve as advocates for diversity beyond the classroom. They collaborate with parents, community organizations, and policymakers to promote inclusive practices and support for learners from marginalized groups. Advocacy also involves identifying and addressing systemic barriers, challenging discriminatory practices, and ensuring that institutional goals align with social justice and equity objectives. Effective leadership in this area strengthens the link between schools and communities and ensures that diversity becomes an embedded value rather than a symbolic gesture (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2023).

v. ***Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability:*** Another critical role of leaders in advancing diversity is the continuous monitoring and evaluation of policies and practices. Leaders track student performance, participation, and engagement to identify gaps or barriers affecting marginalized groups. They also hold staff accountable for implementing inclusive strategies and provide corrective measures where needed. Research shows that institutions with systematic monitoring and accountability processes are more likely to sustain improvements in diversity and equity outcomes over time (Mette et al, 2023). This ensures that diversity is not treated as a one-time initiative but as a continuous, measurable priority.

Educational Leadership and Equity-Oriented Decision Making

Equity-oriented decision making is a central responsibility of educational leaders in diverse learning environments. It involves making choices, setting priorities, and allocating resources in ways that reduce systemic disparities and provide fair opportunities for all learners. Leaders are expected to go beyond uniform treatment of students and focus on addressing specific needs to ensure comparable outcomes. The following five sub-topics explain the key roles of educational leaders in promoting equity through decision making:

i. ***Identifying Inequities and Learning Gaps:*** The first step in equity-oriented decision making is identifying where inequities exist. Leaders must use data, observation, and feedback to recognize disparities in achievement, access to resources, and participation among different student groups. Disaggregating data by factors such as socioeconomic status, gender, disability, and language proficiency allows leaders to pinpoint gaps that require targeted interventions. Research indicates that schools led by leaders who actively monitor and analyze inequities show improved outcomes for disadvantaged students (Assefa, 2025). By identifying gaps, leaders can ensure that interventions are focused where they are needed most.

ii. ***Strategic Resource Allocation:*** Equity requires leaders to allocate resources based on learners' specific needs rather than distributing them equally. This may include providing additional support, specialized teaching materials, assistive technologies, or targeted programs for students who face disadvantages. Leaders must make informed decisions that maximize the impact of limited resources while addressing structural inequalities. Studies show that equity-focused resource allocation improves academic performance and retention for marginalized learners (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2023). Strategic resource management ensures that every learner has the tools and support necessary to succeed.

iii. ***Policy Development and Implementation:*** Leaders influence the creation and enforcement of institutional policies that support equity. This includes policies on admissions, assessment, staffing, and student support programs. Equity-oriented policies are designed to remove barriers, promote fair treatment, and provide opportunities for all learners to thrive. Research indicates that institutions with deliberate equity-focused policies experience lower dropout rates and increased participation among historically underserved groups (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2023). Leadership in this area ensures that equity is embedded in the institutional framework rather than left to chance.

iv. ***Inclusive Decision-Making Practices:*** Equity-oriented leaders actively involve stakeholders in the decision-making process, including students, teachers, parents, and community members. By incorporating diverse perspectives, leaders ensure that decisions are fair, contextually appropriate, and reflective of the needs of all learners. Collaborative decision making also fosters transparency, accountability, and trust within the institution. Studies show that inclusive leadership practices enhance institutional commitment to equity and improve outcomes for marginalized groups (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2022). Involving stakeholders strengthens the legitimacy and sustainability of equity-focused initiatives.

v. ***Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability:*** Finally, educational leaders must establish systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of equity-oriented decisions. This includes tracking student progress, assessing the effectiveness of programs, and holding staff accountable for implementing inclusive practices. Continuous evaluation allows leaders to make evidence-based adjustments and ensure that

equity goals are achieved. Research demonstrates that schools with robust monitoring and accountability systems sustain improvements in equity over time. Effective leadership in this area ensures that equity is not a one-time initiative but an ongoing institutional priority.

Inclusive Leadership Practices in Teaching and Learning Environments

Inclusive leadership in education focuses on creating learning environments where all students, regardless of background or ability, can participate fully and succeed academically. Leaders are responsible for shaping institutional culture, supporting teachers, and implementing practices that promote inclusion. The following five sub-topics explain how educational leaders foster inclusivity in teaching and learning environments:

i. ***Creating a Culture of Inclusion:*** A core responsibility of inclusive leaders is to build a school or institutional culture that values every learner. This involves promoting respect, understanding, and acceptance of differences among students and staff. Leaders set the tone by modeling inclusive behavior, celebrating diversity, and ensuring that policies and practices reflect the institution's commitment to inclusion. Research shows that schools with a strong inclusive culture have higher levels of student engagement, collaboration, and a sense of belonging (Richard & Cosner, 2024). Creating a positive and inclusive culture provides the foundation for all other inclusion practices.

ii. ***Curriculum and Instructional Adaptation:*** Inclusive leaders ensure that curricula and instructional methods meet the needs of diverse learners. This includes integrating multicultural content, using teaching strategies that accommodate different learning styles, and ensuring that materials are accessible to students with disabilities. By adapting instruction to the needs of all learners, leaders help ensure that every student can engage meaningfully with the curriculum. Studies indicate that inclusive curriculum design improves participation, comprehension, and academic achievement among students from marginalized groups (Dhakal, 2024).

iii. ***Teacher Support and Professional Development:*** Leaders must provide teachers with guidance, resources, and training to implement inclusive practices effectively. Professional development programs focus on culturally responsive teaching, differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, and strategies for supporting students with varying abilities and backgrounds. Research demonstrates that teachers who receive consistent support from leaders are more confident and effective in creating inclusive classrooms (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2023). Supporting teachers strengthens the institution's capacity to sustain inclusive practices over time.

iv. ***Policy Implementation and Resource Provision:*** Inclusive leadership also involves ensuring that institutional policies and resource allocation support all learners. Leaders must develop and enforce policies that remove barriers to

participation, promote equity in access to learning materials, and provide necessary accommodations. Adequate resources, including assistive technologies, learning aids, and additional academic support, enable students with diverse needs to succeed. Studies indicate that equitable resource allocation is a critical factor in achieving meaningful inclusion in education (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2023).

v. ***Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement:*** Finally, inclusive leaders regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of inclusion practices. They collect data on student participation, performance, and well-being to identify gaps and make evidence-based improvements. Leaders hold staff accountable for implementing inclusive strategies and ensure that inclusion is not treated as a one-time initiative but as a continuous priority. Research shows that schools with strong monitoring and feedback systems sustain inclusive practices and improve academic and social outcomes for all learners (Mette, Range, & McBride, 2023). Continuous evaluation ensures that inclusion remains embedded in the culture and practices of the institution.

Challenges Facing Educational Leaders in Implementing DEI

Implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives presents significant challenges for educational leaders. These challenges stem from structural, cultural, resource, and stakeholder dynamics that complicate efforts to institutionalize DEI principles in teaching, learning, and organizational practices. Educational leaders must navigate these obstacles while maintaining institutional effectiveness, stakeholder trust, and equitable outcomes for all learners. The following five sub-topics explain the major challenges leaders commonly encounter:

i. ***Resistance to Change:*** One of the most prevalent barriers to DEI implementation is resistance from stakeholders, including teachers, parents, board members, and community groups. Resistance may stem from misconceptions about DEI, fear of losing traditional values, or skepticism about its relevance to academic priorities. Some stakeholders view DEI initiatives as politically motivated or unnecessary, leading to pushback that can stall or undermine programs (Kyere et al, 2024). Institutional inertia and adherence to long-standing practices further intensify resistance, making it difficult for leaders to introduce transformative DEI strategies effectively.

ii. ***Limited Resources and Funding:*** Adequate financial and human resources are critical for effective DEI implementation, yet many educational institutions struggle with funding constraints. DEI initiatives often require resources for professional development, curriculum redesign, specialized staff, and learner support programs. Budget limitations may force leaders to prioritize other operational needs, leaving DEI efforts underfunded and insufficiently supported. In low-resource settings, leaders may face systemic funding inequalities that hinder their ability to provide equitable opportunities and support for all learners (Kyere et al,, 2024).

iii. ***Cultural Biases and Stereotypes:*** Deeply rooted cultural biases within institutions and society at large can undermine DEI efforts. Educators and administrators may hold unconscious biases that affect expectations and interactions with students, resulting in unequal treatment or subtle discrimination. These biases can also influence hiring, promotion, and disciplinary practices, perpetuating exclusionary norms rather than advancing inclusion (Fagun, 2025). Cultural resistance to challenging existing norms further complicates leaders' ability to foster an inclusive institutional climate.

iv. ***Lack of Clear Metrics and Accountability:*** Measuring the success of DEI initiatives remains a major challenge. Many institutions lack standardized metrics or reliable data systems to assess the impact of DEI policies on student outcomes, institutional culture, and staff practices. Without clear indicators, leaders struggle to demonstrate progress, justify resource allocation, and build sustained commitment. The absence of accountability mechanisms can lead to inconsistent implementation, tokenistic practices, or superficial compliance rather than meaningful change.

v. ***Inadequate Leadership Preparation and Professional Development:*** Educational leaders themselves often lack the preparation and training necessary to implement DEI initiatives effectively. Traditional leadership programs frequently emphasize administrative and managerial skills while providing limited focus on equity literacy, cultural competence, and inclusive leadership practice. As a result, many leaders feel ill-equipped to address systemic bias, design inclusive policies, or lead institutional change (Assefa, 2025). Ensuring that leaders possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for DEI leadership remains a persistent challenge.

These challenges reveal that implementing DEI is not a simple task of policy adoption; it requires deep shifts in institutional culture, resource allocation, leadership capacity, and community engagement. Educational leaders must be prepared to confront resistance, secure resources, build data systems, and continually develop their own competencies to create sustained and meaningful change.

Strategic Pathways for Strengthening DEI-Focused Educational Leadership

Educational leaders face significant challenges in implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), including resistance to change, limited resources, cultural biases, unclear accountability, and inadequate preparation. Addressing these challenges requires deliberate and strategic approaches that integrate DEI into leadership practices, institutional policies, and teaching environments. The following five pathways align directly with these challenges and provide actionable solutions:

i. ***Building Awareness and Reducing Resistance to Change:*** Resistance to DEI initiatives is often fueled by misconceptions, fear of change, or adherence to traditional practices. Leaders can address this by fostering awareness among

stakeholders, including teachers, staff, students, and parents. This involves clearly communicating the purpose and benefits of DEI, providing training on equity and inclusion, and demonstrating how DEI aligns with institutional goals and student success. Research shows that proactive communication and stakeholder engagement reduce opposition and build broad-based support for DEI initiatives (Richard & Cosner, 2024). By addressing resistance directly, leaders create an environment more receptive to systemic change.

ii. ***Strategic Resource Allocation and Support:*** Limited funding and resources often constrain DEI implementation. Leaders must prioritize resource allocation based on equity needs, ensuring that disadvantaged students and under-resourced programs receive sufficient support. This can include investing in professional development, inclusive curriculum materials, assistive technologies, and student support services. Studies indicate that targeted resource distribution improves learning outcomes and strengthens the sustainability of DEI efforts (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2023). Strategic resource planning ensures that DEI initiatives are practical and effective despite financial constraints.

iii. ***Addressing Cultural Biases and Promoting Equity Mindsets:*** Deep-seated cultural biases and stereotypes can undermine DEI efforts. Leaders can address this challenge by promoting equity literacy and cultural competence among staff and students. Professional development, reflective practices, and bias-awareness programs equip educators to recognize and counteract discrimination in classrooms and institutional processes. Research highlights that intentional leadership in addressing bias improves inclusivity and learner outcomes while shifting institutional culture toward fairness and respect (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2023).

iv. ***Establishing Clear Metrics and Accountability:*** A lack of clear metrics and accountability mechanisms makes it difficult to measure DEI progress. Leaders must implement systems for monitoring student outcomes, participation rates, staff diversity, and institutional climate. Data-driven evaluation provides insight into inequities, informs decision-making, and ensures that policies are effectively implemented. Studies demonstrate that institutions with strong accountability and evaluation frameworks maintain long-term improvements in equity and inclusion (Mette et al, 2023). Accountability mechanisms also reduce tokenistic practices and encourage consistent follow-through on DEI commitments.

v. ***Developing Leadership Capacity and Professional Preparation:*** Many educational leaders feel unprepared to implement DEI strategies due to limited training in equity-focused leadership. Addressing this requires ongoing professional development programs that build knowledge, skills, and dispositions in inclusive leadership, cultural responsiveness, and equity-oriented decision-making. Long-term training programs empower leaders to navigate resistance, manage resources effectively, and implement systemic change (Richard & Cosner, 2024).

Strengthening leadership capacity ensures that DEI initiatives are guided by informed, competent, and confident leaders.

Conclusion

Educational leadership today requires more than managing schools or enforcing rules; it involves creating learning environments where all students feel valued, supported, and included. Leaders must ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are not just abstract ideas but are actively reflected in school policies, teaching practices, and learning opportunities. This chapter has highlighted that effective leaders promote diversity through inclusive curricula, support teachers with professional development, design fair and equitable policies, involve communities in decision-making, and make choices that respond to the needs of all learners. Inclusive and equity-focused leadership fosters a sense of belonging, improves student engagement, enhances learning outcomes, and strengthens the social justice foundation of schools.

At the same time, leaders face significant challenges, including resistance to change, limited funding, entrenched cultural biases, and lack of training in DEI practices. To overcome these, leaders must engage stakeholders, allocate resources based on need, establish clear monitoring systems, address biases, and continuously develop their leadership skills. By strategically addressing these challenges, educational leaders can ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion become central to school culture, providing every learner with fair opportunities, improving institutional effectiveness, and preparing students to succeed in increasingly diverse and complex societies.

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CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

WOMEN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION LEADERSHIP: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND EMERGING TRENDS

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Introduction

Leadership in Early Childhood Education (ECE) has gained global attention in recent decades as researchers, policymakers, and practitioners increasingly recognize the foundational role early learning plays in lifelong development. Within this expanding discourse, women occupy a central yet often paradoxical position. Although ECE is a female-dominated profession in many countries, women remain significantly underrepresented in senior administrative, policymaking, and strategic leadership roles. This discrepancy highlights the complex interplay between gendered expectations, professional hierarchies, and socio-cultural norms that continue to shape leadership trajectories in the sector.

Historically, ECE has been perceived as an extension of women's natural caregiving roles, a notion that simultaneously enabled their entry into the field while constraining their advancement to positions of authority. As early childhood programmes expand and professional standards rise, leadership demands have become more sophisticated—requiring expertise in pedagogy, management, advocacy, community engagement, and policy interpretation. Despite possessing the instructional competence and relational skills essential for effective early childhood leadership, many women face structural, institutional, and personal barriers that limit upward mobility. These challenges manifest in areas such as limited access to professional development, work–family balance pressures, gender stereotypes, and unequal promotion pathways.

However, the landscape is not without promise. Emerging leadership models increasingly emphasize collaboration, emotional intelligence, mentorship, and distributed decision-making—approaches where women often excel. In addition, global advocacy for gender equity, the professionalization of ECE, and the rise of women's leadership networks are creating new opportunities for growth and influence. Technological advancements and shifts toward more inclusive leadership paradigms are also redefining what leadership looks like in early years settings, making space for diverse and contextually responsive approaches. In light of these developments, examining women's leadership in ECE is both timely and necessary. This chapter explores the challenges women encounter in pursuing and sustaining

leadership roles, identifies the opportunities shaping their professional journeys, and highlights emerging trends influencing leadership dynamics in contemporary ECE contexts. By illuminating these interconnected dimensions, the chapter contributes to ongoing efforts to cultivate equitable, empowered, and future-ready leadership in early childhood education.

Challenges Women Encounter in Pursuing and Sustaining Leadership Roles

Although women constitute the majority of practitioners in Early Childhood Education (ECE), they remain disproportionately underrepresented in strategic leadership roles. This disparity is shaped by numerous structural, cultural, institutional, and personal challenges. These barriers reflect broader gender inequalities embedded in educational systems and society at large (O'Connor & Murphy, 2020).

Gendered assumptions about leadership continue to undermine women's advancement. ECE is traditionally viewed as an extension of women's caregiving roles, which reinforces the belief that women are better suited for nurturing positions rather than administrative authority (Hayden, 2019). Leadership is often associated with traits such as assertiveness and authority—qualities stereotypically linked to male leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2018). Consequently, women who adopt strong leadership behaviours may be criticized for violating gender norms, while relational leadership styles—common among women—tend to be undervalued in formal leadership selection (Black & Stanton, 2021). Women frequently shoulder disproportionate family responsibilities, including childcare, eldercare, and domestic work. These demands often conflict with the long working hours, after-school responsibilities, and administrative commitments required in leadership positions (Okeke, 2022). The absence of supportive policies—such as flexible work schedules, family leave, and accessible childcare—further complicates women's ability to sustain leadership roles (Browne & Milligan, 2020). As a result, many female educators hesitate to pursue promotions or experience burnout after attaining leadership roles.

Access to leadership-oriented professional development also remains a significant challenge. Many ECE settings prioritize pedagogical training over managerial capacity-building, limiting women's exposure to leadership competencies (Thornton, 2019). In addition, leadership networks and mentorship programmes are often male-dominated, reducing women's opportunities to gain the sponsorship needed for career advancement (Kilonzo & Achieng, 2021). Without mentorship, women lack strategic guidance on navigating institutional politics and positioning themselves for leadership opportunities. Women often encounter institutional biases in recruitment, promotion, and evaluation processes. Decision-makers may favour candidates with traditional administrative backgrounds—historically held by men—thereby disadvantaging qualified women (Johnson & Udegbe, 2021). Moreover, leadership evaluation tools frequently prioritize managerial or authoritative styles

over collaborative and instructional leadership approaches more common among women (Grobler, 2020). Subtle discriminatory practices, such as exclusion from informal decision-making groups, further perpetuate gender disparities.

Women in leadership positions also may experience professional isolation, particularly when they are the minority in senior roles. Limited representation reduces the presence of peer networks that provide emotional support, collaboration, and shared problem-solving (Carter & Adu, 2019). In male-dominated boards or governing structures, women often struggle to have their voices heard or receive due recognition for their contributions (Nguyen, 2020). ECE remains one of the least funded and least valued segments of the education sector in many countries. Chronic underfunding results in low wages, inadequate facilities, and insufficient resources—challenges that disproportionately impact women leaders who must manage these constraints while demonstrating effectiveness (UNICEF, 2021). The low societal status attached to early childhood work discourages many women from aspiring to leadership pathways perceived as stressful but under-rewarded (Pearson, 2019).

Gender wage gaps in addition, persist in the ECE workforce, with women often earning less than men in similar roles. Lower earnings limit women's access to higher education, conferences, coaching programmes, and leadership training—investments essential for career growth (Adewale & Hassan, 2020). Economic inequality further reduces women's ability to compete for leadership roles that require long-term financial and time investments. Some women internalize societal messages that undermine their belief in their leadership abilities. Research suggests that women tend to underestimate their qualifications and may apply for leadership roles only when they meet all requirements, unlike men who often apply with partial qualifications (Ely & Meyerson, 2019). Without confidence-building programmes and supportive supervision, these internalized biases limit women's willingness to pursue leadership opportunities.

Rigid institutional cultures also hinder women's leadership advancement. Some organizations maintain traditional hierarchies that prioritize seniority, resist collaborative leadership approaches, and reinforce male-dominated succession patterns (Mbatha, 2020). Women attempting to introduce transformative practices may face resistance, marginalization, or devaluation of their leadership style. Women from marginalized groups face additional layers of discrimination shaped by intersections of gender with ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic background, or rural disadvantage (Crenshaw, 2021). These multiple, overlapping barriers reduce their access to opportunities and leadership pathways. Intersectionality highlights how leadership inequality is often deeper for women belonging to minority groups.

Opportunities Shaping Women's Professional Journeys

Despite the numerous challenges women face in accessing and sustaining leadership roles in Early Childhood Education (ECE), the sector also presents a range of emerging opportunities that support women's leadership growth. These opportunities are linked to shifts in educational policy, evolving leadership paradigms, global advocacy for gender equity, increased access to professional development pathways, and advancements in digital technologies. These factors collectively create enabling environments that have the potential to enhance women's visibility, influence, and effectiveness as leaders in ECE settings (Miller & Stuart, 2021). International bodies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UN Women, and the World Bank have amplified campaigns promoting gender equity and women's empowerment in education. These initiatives encourage governments and educational institutions to implement gender-responsive policies that promote equal access to leadership opportunities (UNESCO, 2022). For example, gender mainstreaming frameworks and affirmative action policies have increased the number of women considered for administrative and policy-level roles. Advocacy efforts also emphasize the need for leadership diversity, reinforcing the notion that women's perspectives are essential for strengthening early childhood policy and practice (Adetunji & Roberts, 2021).

The increasing professionalization of ECE has elevated the demand for qualified and competent leaders capable of managing complex early learning environments. As ECE shifts from informal caregiving to a formal, regulated educational sector, leadership roles require specialized training in curriculum development, child psychology, assessment, programme management, and community engagement (Thornton, 2020). Because women already constitute the majority of the ECE workforce, many are well positioned to transition into these expanding leadership roles. Professionalization therefore creates a natural pipeline for women to assume positions of authority (Harris & Okwu, 2021). Women-focused leadership networks and mentorship initiatives are crucial in supporting professional advancement. Networks such as national ECE leadership associations, women educators' forums, and international leadership fellowships offer platforms for collaboration, skill development, and visibility (Browne & Williams, 2021). Mentorship programmes pair emerging female leaders with experienced professionals who provide guidance, sponsorship, and exposure to strategic opportunities. These structures help women build confidence, navigate organizational politics, and access leadership pipelines that may have previously been inaccessible (Kilonzo & Achieng, 2022).

Leadership models within ECE are increasingly shifting toward collaborative, instructional, and transformational paradigms—styles that align closely with the relational competencies many women possess (Eagly & Carli, 2018). These approaches value empathy, communication, teamwork, and shared decision-making. Research indicates that women excel in emotionally intelligent and community-focused leadership practices, making them well-suited for contemporary early

childhood leadership demands (Black & Stanton, 2022). This paradigm shift enhances recognition of women's strengths and increases their chances of being selected for leadership roles. The increased availability of leadership-oriented training programmes, short courses, online certifications, and advanced degrees in ECE opens pathways for women to build their leadership competence. Many universities and professional bodies now offer accessible programmes tailored for working educators, including part-time and distance-learning options (Jackson & O'Connor, 2020). Scholarships and capacity-building grants further encourage women to pursue advanced qualifications. As educational attainment is a key determinant of leadership selection, these opportunities significantly enhance women's competitiveness (Mbatha, 2020).

The digital transformation of the education sector—accelerated by global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic—has opened new avenues for women's leadership. Technology facilitates virtual meetings, remote collaboration, online administrative systems, and digital professional learning communities, reducing the time and mobility constraints that previously hindered women's leadership participation (Nguyen, 2021). Digital platforms also enable women to engage in international conferences, publish research, and showcase their expertise globally. This expanded visibility enhances their leadership credibility and influence. Many countries have introduced reforms aimed at improving gender parity in leadership, including parental leave, flexible work hours, job-sharing arrangements, and anti-discrimination policies (Okeke, 2023). Such reforms reduce institutional barriers and make leadership more compatible with women's family responsibilities. Some ECE organizations have also adopted supportive policies such as leadership shadowing, succession planning, and targeted training for female staff. These reforms gradually normalize women's presence in leadership positions and provide a sustainable pathway for long-term leadership engagement (Johnson & Udegbe, 2022).

Women bring extensive pedagogical knowledge, frontline experience, and child-centred expertise to ECE leadership. Recognition of these competencies is increasing, particularly as research underscores the connection between instructional leadership and child learning outcomes (Pearson, 2020). Because women are deeply embedded in the daily operations of early learning environments, their leadership is often grounded in practical understanding and empathy—qualities highly valued in modern ECE management. This recognition elevates women's status and strengthens their professional identity. ECE leadership increasingly prioritizes family engagement, community partnerships, and cross-sector collaboration. These roles require strong interpersonal skills, communication, and cultural sensitivity—areas where women often demonstrate high competence (Carter & Adu, 2020). The increasing value placed on community-oriented leadership offers women expanded opportunities to lead initiatives, coordinate outreach programmes, and strengthen school–home partnerships, thereby enhancing their leadership profiles.

Recent global movements promoting diversity and inclusion recognize that leadership teams must reflect the communities they serve. This shift encourages institutions to intentionally diversify their leadership structures by including more women, ethnic minorities, and individuals from underrepresented backgrounds (Crenshaw, 2021). Inclusion-oriented hiring and promotion policies create long-term, sustainable pathways for women's leadership advancement in ECE.

Emerging Trends Influencing Women's Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Women's leadership in Early Childhood Education (ECE) is undergoing notable transformation as global educational systems respond to new social, economic, and technological realities. Several emerging trends are reshaping the opportunities, expectations, and professional identities of women leaders, creating both momentum and complexity in the sector. These trends reflect broader shifts in education governance, workforce development, digital innovation, and sociocultural attitudes toward gender equity. A major trend reshaping women's leadership opportunities is the growing professionalization of the ECE workforce. Many countries are raising qualification requirements, strengthening accreditation systems, and promoting standards of pedagogical leadership. This shift elevates the status of the field and expands pathways for women who historically dominated the workforce but lacked formal recognition for their expertise. As ECE becomes more aligned with the broader education sector, women gain better access to advanced degrees, leadership certification programs, and competitive career pathways (Osgood, 2019; Urban, Cardini & Flórez Romero, 2018).

Professionalization also legitimizes roles such as pedagogical leader, instructional coach, and curriculum coordinator, positions increasingly occupied by women. These roles provide stepping stones to higher-level administration and strengthen women's leadership identities, fostering confidence and authority in decision-making processes. ECE is moving away from traditional hierarchical leadership toward distributed, collaborative, and shared leadership models. These approaches value collective decision-making, educator agency, and community partnerships. Since women often excel in relational, inclusive, and participatory leadership styles, distributed leadership aligns with their strengths and experiences (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011). This shift widens the leadership landscape by enabling more women to assume leadership responsibilities without needing formal administrative titles. It also increases recognition of the leadership contributions women already provide through mentoring, team coordination, and family engagement roles. As institutions adopt these models, the leadership pipeline becomes more accessible and less constrained by rigid positional structures.

Emerging global conversations around equity, children's rights, and anti-bias education are positioning women leaders at the forefront of advocacy in ECE. Women are increasingly recognized for their commitment to inclusive practices, community engagement, and culturally responsive pedagogy. As social justice leadership gains prominence, women's strengths in empathy, collaboration, and

relational leadership are viewed as essential competencies rather than peripheral ones (MacNaughton, 2020). This transformation elevates the role of women leaders in policy discussions, curriculum design, and program reforms aimed at equity and inclusion. The focus on advocacy provides new arenas for leadership that extend beyond traditional administrative functions.

The digitalization of early childhood settings also is accelerating, creating new leadership demands and opportunities. Digital documentation, online communication platforms, virtual learning environments, and data-informed decision-making are now integral to ECE management. This technological shift allows women to expand their leadership capacity through digital literacy and instructional technology expertise (Parette & Blum, 2019). Technology also enhances flexibility. Remote meetings, online professional development, and digital networks reduce geographic and time constraints that previously hindered women with caregiving responsibilities. In this way, digital transformation not only modernizes the field but also supports women's work-life integration. Governments and international agencies increasingly emphasize quality assurance, program evaluation, and accountability in ECE. This trend elevates the leadership role in maintaining standards, implementing assessment frameworks, and improving teaching quality (Pascal & Bertram, 2016). Because the majority of the ECE workforce is female, these reforms bring more women into strategic roles associated with quality improvement, curriculum oversight, and policy implementation. The demand for leaders with deep pedagogical knowledge—an area where many women have extensive experience—strengthens their professional relevance. Women leaders are often well-positioned to champion child-centred pedagogy and holistic development, competencies now prioritized in global quality discourse.

International organizations, universities, and professional associations are expanding leadership development programs targeted at women in education. Initiatives focusing on mentorship, coaching, confidence building, and career navigation are helping women overcome historical barriers to leadership (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2021). Many of these programs intentionally promote gender equity, preparing women to negotiate, advocate, and thrive in leadership environments. These initiatives contribute to a growing pool of confident, skilled women leaders who are equipped for advanced roles in administration, policy, and organizational governance.

Modern educational leadership increasingly values emotional intelligence (EI), reflective practice, and relational ethics. These competencies are closely associated with effective early childhood leadership and align strongly with the strengths women commonly exhibit in nurturing, collaborative, and emotionally attuned practices (Goleman, 2017; Thornton, 2015). As leadership frameworks incorporate EI-based competencies, women's contributions are viewed as essential rather than supplementary. This recognition shifts leadership expectations away from solely managerial or authoritative styles toward more holistic approaches that prioritize

wellbeing, relationships, and community-building. Emerging research within gender and education studies emphasizes intersectionality, acknowledging the layered experiences of women from diverse cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds. This trend pushes ECE leadership scholarship to consider how women's identities shape their access to power, their leadership practices, and the barriers they face (Crenshaw, 2017). Intersectional frameworks encourage policies and programs that better support diverse women leaders, opening leadership spaces to voices previously marginalized. This shift has begun to influence leadership selection processes, professional development agendas, and organizational practices across many ECE systems.

Suggestions

The following suggestions are made for improvement:

1. Governments and regulatory agencies should implement gender-sensitive policies that mandate equitable representation of women in leadership positions across early childhood institutions.
2. Higher education institutions, teacher training colleges, and professional bodies should develop accessible leadership programmes tailored for women educators.
3. Early childhood organizations should set up mentorship frameworks that pair emerging women leaders with experienced administrators.
4. Education authorities should encourage leadership approaches—such as distributed, relational, and transformational leadership—that value collaboration, emotional intelligence, and shared decision-making.
5. Institutions should adopt supportive practices such as flexible work hours, job-sharing arrangements, family leave policies, and on-site childcare facilities to ease the pressures women face in balancing leadership roles with family commitments.
6. Investment in digital infrastructure and training can empower women to participate in remote leadership activities, online professional learning communities, and digital administrative systems.
7. Governments, NGOs, and professional associations should support the creation of women's leadership forums where female educators can network, collaborate, share experiences, and advocate collectively.

Conclusion

Women play a central and indispensable role in shaping quality early childhood education, yet their leadership contributions remain constrained by a combination of gender stereotypes, limited professional opportunities, institutional biases, and socio-cultural expectations. Despite these challenges, the evolving landscape of early childhood education presents unprecedented opportunities for women to rise into leadership positions. Global gender equity initiatives, the professionalization of the ECE sector, higher access to leadership training, digital transformation, and inclusive leadership paradigms collectively create more enabling environments for

women's advancement. The chapter emphasizes that women bring unique strengths—such as relational competence, instructional expertise, and community-building skills—that align closely with contemporary leadership needs in early childhood contexts. However, capitalizing on these strengths requires deliberate structural reforms, continued advocacy, and an expansion of supportive networks and professional development pathways.

Ultimately, strengthening women's leadership in early childhood education is not merely a matter of equity; it directly contributes to improving the quality of early learning environments, promoting inclusive educational cultures, and ensuring that early childhood systems are responsive, resilient, and future-ready. Empowering women leaders is therefore an essential strategy for building strong foundations for national development and advancing global commitments to quality early childhood education.

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CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS IN HOME MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

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Introduction

Leadership defined by Northouse (2022) broadly refers to the process of influencing, guiding, and coordinating the activities of individuals or groups to achieve specific goals. In organizational and social science contexts, it involves motivating, directing, and managing people toward desired outcomes while accounting for their capacities, needs, and situational factors. Yukl (2023) describes leadership as a set of behaviours and skills used to influence others, shape decision-making, and ensure objectives are met through effective communication, coordination, and support. Similarly, Bolden, Hawkins, Gosling and Taylor (2022) define it as a relational process that sets direction, aligns people, and fosters commitment to collective goals. Across these scholarly perspectives, leadership is consistently portrayed as a purposeful, influence-driven process that organizes and mobilizes individuals toward shared aims, providing a conceptual foundation for understanding its application in various contexts.

Building on this general understanding, leadership in the family specifically refers to how guidance and influence are applied to help family members work together toward common goals. In the home, leadership emphasizes responsibility, care, emotional support, and modeling positive behaviours rather than mere authority or control (Walsh, 2022). As family structures evolve, leadership roles are increasingly flexible, shifting according to ability, maturity, and situational needs. Alderson and White (2023) note that families with clear and supportive leadership experience greater cooperation, emotional safety, and understanding, while those with weak leadership often face confusion, tension, and poor communication. Thus, leadership serves as the foundation for decision-making, interaction, and the maintenance of order and harmony within the household.

Building on the central role of leadership, home management represents how leadership is applied in daily family life. Home management involves planning, organizing, coordinating, and supervising household activities such as budgeting, sharing domestic responsibilities, managing time, and resolving everyday problems (Darling & Cassidy, 2022). Through these activities, leadership ideas are translated into practical actions that affect family comfort, stability, and cooperation. Effective home management reduces stress, promotes fairness in task

distribution, and improves relationships among family members (Palkovitz & Fagan, 2023). In contrast, poor home management often results in unequal workloads, financial strain, and frequent disagreements. This connection shows that leadership alone is not enough; how leadership is practiced through home management largely determines whether family life is orderly, supportive, and emotionally balanced.

While leadership and home management are important, the way leadership roles are shared within the family further shapes family outcomes. Leadership dynamics describe how leadership responsibilities are distributed, adjusted, and transferred among family members over time, including who makes decisions and how influence is exercised in the home (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2022). These dynamics are influenced by experience, economic contribution, age, and family values. Research shows that families with flexible leadership dynamics communicate more effectively and cooperate better in managing household responsibilities (García & Serra, 2024). In contrast, rigid leadership patterns often lead to resistance, emotional withdrawal, and conflict. Understanding leadership dynamics therefore helps explain differences in how families manage their homes and maintain positive relationships over time.

Within leadership dynamics, different leadership styles shape family interactions in distinct ways. Authoritarian leadership is characterized by one individual making decisions without involving others and enforcing strict rules. Although this approach may create short-term order, it often limits communication, reduces trust, and increases conflict over time (Walsh, 2022; Alderson & White, 2023). In contrast, shared leadership involves joint decision-making and shared responsibility among family members. This approach allows members to feel valued and encourages cooperation, open communication, and emotional closeness. Studies indicate that shared leadership supports better problem-solving and helps families adjust more effectively during challenges (Palkovitz & Fagan, 2023; García & Serra, 2024). These contrasting styles show how leadership dynamics can either weaken or strengthen family relationships.

As leadership, home management, and leadership dynamics interact, families experience different levels of stability and relationship quality over time. Sustainable family relationships refer to the ability of families to maintain trust, communication, emotional support, and cooperation even during stressful situations (Ponzetti, 2022). Families that practice inclusive leadership and effective home management are more likely to develop strong emotional bonds and show resilience in the face of challenges (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2024). In contrast, poor leadership practices often weaken relationships and increase instability within the home. It is against this background that this study examined leadership dynamics in home management for sustainable family relationships.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing importance of leadership in maintaining healthy family relationships, many families continue to experience persistent conflict, weak communication, emotional distance, and unstable relationships. In many homes, leadership is still exercised through rigid, authoritarian practices where decisions are made by one individual without consultation. Such practices often silence other family members, reduce trust, and increase tension, making effective home management difficult. Even among educated individuals who possess professional knowledge of family life and management, these leadership challenges remain evident. This situation raises serious concerns about the gap between knowledge of effective family leadership and its actual practice within the home environment.

In contrast, shared leadership has been identified as a healthier approach that promotes cooperation, communication, and emotional bonding in families. However, this approach is not consistently practiced, and its influence on sustainable family relationships remains underexplored within professional family-oriented groups. There is limited empirical evidence examining how different leadership dynamics, particularly authoritarian and shared leadership, influence home management outcomes and long-term family stability among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State. This lack of context-specific research creates a gap in understanding how leadership dynamics within the home shape sustainable family relationships, which this study sought to address.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine leadership dynamics in home management for sustainable family relationships. The study focused on the following objectives;

1. To assess the influence of dominant or authoritarian leadership on family conflict, trust, and relational stability among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State.
2. To evaluate the influence of shared leadership on family communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. How does dominant or authoritarian leadership influence family conflict, trust, and relational stability among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State?
2. How does shared leadership influence family communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. **H_{01}:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female Home Economics education lecturers on the influence of dominant or authoritarian leadership on family conflict, trust, and relational stability.
2. **H_{02}:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of urban and rural Home Economics education lecturers on the influence of shared leadership on family communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, selected to enable systematic collection of detailed data on respondents' perceptions, experiences, and behaviours without manipulation of variables, making it suitable for examining how leadership dynamics in home management influence sustainable family relationships among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State. The population of the study comprised all 120 Home Economics lecturers in the five public universities in Delta State. They include Delta State University, Abraka (30); Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun (15); Nigerian Maritime University, Okerenkoko (10); Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba (25); and University of Delta, Agbor (40), representing lecturers with both professional training in Home Economics and lived experience in family management. Due to the relatively small population, census sampling was employed, meaning that all 120 lecturers were included in the study, ensuring complete representation of the population and enhancing the reliability and generalizability of the findings. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Leadership Dynamics in Home Management for Sustainable Family Relationships Questionnaire (LDHMSFRQ)" developed around the study variables: dominant/ authoritarian leadership, shared leadership, family conflict, trust, relational stability, communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding, with items scored on a four-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The instrument underwent content validation by three experts in Home Economics Education, Educational Psychology, and Family Studies to ensure relevance, clarity, and construct coverage, and reliability was established via the test-retest method over a two-week interval, yielding a Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient of 0.85, indicating high internal consistency and stability. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review boards of the universities involved, and permission to administer questionnaires was secured from the heads of departments prior to data collection to ensure compliance with research ethics. The questionnaires were administered directly to all 120 lecturers, and 100 valid responses were retrieved, representing a response rate of 83.3 percent. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer the research questions, and inferential statistics, specifically independent samples t-test, to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance; prior to analysis, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were tested and satisfied, and parametric analysis was deemed appropriate because the Likert-

scale data were treated as approximately interval-level, consistent with established practices in social sciences. This comprehensive methodological approach ensures rigorous data collection, ethical compliance, and reliable statistical analysis, providing a robust empirical basis for understanding how the professional knowledge and personal experiences of Home Economics lecturers in Delta State shape leadership practices and, ultimately, the sustainability of family relationships.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: How does dominant or authoritarian leadership influence family conflict, trust, and relational stability among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State?

Table 1: *Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Responses on how Dominant or Authoritarian Leadership Influence Family Conflict, Trust, and Relational Stability Among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State.* ***n = 100***

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Decisions in households are often made without consulting other members.	3.42	0.68	Agree
2.	Household members feel uncomfortable expressing opinions due to dominant behaviour.	3.18	0.75	Agree
3.	Household rules are frequently dictated without discussion.	3.35	0.72	Agree
4.	Family members rarely challenge decisions made by the head of the household.	3.10	0.80	Agree
5.	Conflict arises when family members' opinions differ from those of the dominant leader.	3.50	0.65	Agree
6.	Trust among family members is sometimes strained due to authoritative approaches.	3.22	0.78	Agree
7.	Relational stability is affected when decisions are made solely by one household leader.	3.40	0.70	Agree
8.	Household members often feel excluded from important decisions.	3.28	0.74	Agree
9.	Consensus is rarely sought when making household decisions.	3.12	0.77	Agree
10.	Dominant leadership styles occasionally cause misunderstandings at home.	3.36	0.69	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.29**	**0.73**	**Agree**

The data show that dominant or authoritarian leadership strongly influences family conflict, trust, and relational stability. All items had mean values above 3.0 on the 4-point scale, indicating agreement that unilateral decision-making and limited consultation increase conflict and reduce trust. The grand mean of 3.29 reflects a high perception of its negative impact on family relationships, while standard deviations of 0.65 to 0.80 suggest moderate differences in respondents' experiences. These findings indicate that although authoritarian leadership may sometimes enforce order, it can undermine harmony and stability, emphasizing the need for balanced leadership approaches.

Research Question 2: How does shared leadership influence family communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State?

Table 2: *Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Responses on how shared Leadership Influence Family Communication, Cooperation, and Emotional Bonding Among Home Economics Lecturers in Delta State.*

n = 100

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
11.	Household decisions are made collectively with input from all members.	3.58	0.61	Strongly Agree
12.	Family members freely express opinions in household matters.	3.62	0.60	Strongly Agree
13..	Tasks and responsibilities are shared equitably among household members.	3.55	0.64	Strongly Agree
14.	Communication is open and frequent among all household members.	3.60	0.62	Strongly Agree
15.	Cooperation is encouraged and practiced in family decision-making.	3.57	0.65	Strongly Agree
16.	Emotional bonding is strengthened through shared responsibilities.	3.59	0.63	Strongly Agree
17.	Household members feel valued and respected when making joint decisions.	3.61	0.60	Strongly Agree
18.	Conflicts are minimized through collaborative decision-making.	3.56	0.64	Strongly Agree
19.	Family members provide support in executing shared tasks.	3.58	0.61	Strongly Agree
20.	Shared leadership promotes harmony and emotional well-being at home.	3.63	0.59	Strongly Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.59**	**0.62**	**Strongly Agree**

The findings indicate that shared leadership positively influences family communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding. Mean values above 3.5 across all items demonstrate strong agreement that collective decision-making, equitable task distribution, and open communication enhance family cohesion and emotional connections. The grand mean of 3.59 reflects a high overall perception of the benefits of shared leadership. Standard deviations ranging from 0.59 to 0.65 indicate moderate uniformity in perceptions, suggesting a strong consensus on the advantages of collaborative household management. These results emphasize that shared leadership fosters sustainable, harmonious family relationships, in contrast to the conflict-inducing tendencies associated with dominant leadership observed in Table 1.

Table 3: *t-Test Analysis of Male and Female Home Economics Lecturers on the Influence of Dominant/Authoritarian Leadership on Family Conflict, Trust, and Relational Stability (H_{01})*

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Dominant/Authoritarian Leadership	Male	45	3.31	0.72	0.86	98	0.392	Not Significant
	Female	55	3.28	0.74				

The data in Table 3 show no significant difference between male and female Home Economics lecturers regarding the influence of dominant/authoritarian leadership on family conflict, trust, and relational stability, with mean scores of 3.31 and 3.28, $t(98) = 0.86$, $p = 0.392$. This indicates that gender does not affect perceptions of the negative impact of unilateral decision-making and authoritative household practices on family relationships, highlighting the universal recognition of the strain such leadership can impose and the need for inclusive, trust-based household leadership.

Table 4: t-Test Analysis of Urban and Rural Home Economics Lecturers on the Influence of Shared Leadership on Family Communication, Cooperation, and Emotional Bonding (H_{02}).

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Shared Leadership	Urban	60	3.61	0.61	1.12	98	0.266	Not Significant
	Rural	40	3.56	0.63				

The data in Table 4 show no significant difference between urban and rural Home Economics lecturers regarding the influence of shared leadership on family communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding, with mean scores of 3.61 and 3.56, $t(98) = 1.12$, $p = 0.266$. This indicates that institutional location does not affect perceptions of the benefits of shared leadership, as both groups recognize its positive impact on family communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding, suggesting that interventions to promote collaborative household leadership can be applied effectively across urban and rural contexts.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1 examined how dominant or authoritarian leadership influences family conflict, trust, and relational stability among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State. The findings indicate that dominant leadership negatively affects family relationships, as unilateral decision-making and limited consultation were perceived to increase conflict, reduce trust, and destabilize relational bonds. These results are in alignment with Alderson and White (2023), who reported that authoritarian leadership in households tends to create tension and relational strain. Similarly, they correspond with Darling and Cassidy (2022), who found that

authoritative management practices weaken trust and stability within family systems. This suggests that inclusive and consultative leadership approaches are essential to fostering cooperation, trust, and sustainable family relationships.

The t-test analysis in Table 3 examined whether a significant difference exists between male and female Home Economics lecturers regarding the influence of dominant/authoritarian leadership on family conflict, trust, and relational stability. The mean ratings for males and females were closely similar, and the t-test showed no statistically significant difference, leading to the retention of H_{01}. This indicates that gender does not influence perceptions of dominant leadership's effect on family relationships. Both male and female lecturers consistently recognized the negative impact of unilateral and authoritarian household practices, underscoring the universality of this phenomenon regardless of gender and reinforcing the need for consultative leadership.

Research Question 2 examined how shared leadership influences family communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State. The findings indicate that shared leadership positively enhances family interactions, as collaborative decision-making, equitable task-sharing and inclusive practices were perceived to improve communication, strengthen cooperation, and foster emotional bonding. These results are in alignment with Palkovitz and Fagan (2023), who reported that shared leadership within households promotes relational harmony and well-being. Similarly, they correspond with García and Serra (2024), who found that inclusive family leadership enhances communication and emotional connectedness, contributing to sustainable relationships. The findings underscore the importance of cultivating shared leadership practices to sustain positive family dynamics and relational stability.

The t-test analysis in Table 4 examined whether a significant difference exists between urban and rural Home Economics lecturers regarding the influence of shared leadership on family communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding. The mean ratings for urban and rural lecturers were closely similar, and the t-test showed no statistically significant difference, leading to the retention of H_{02}. This demonstrates that institutional location does not influence perceptions of shared leadership benefits. Both urban and rural respondents recognized that collaborative leadership promotes communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding, highlighting the universality of shared leadership advantages and supporting its application across diverse contexts.

Conclusion

The study investigated the influence of leadership dynamics on family relational outcomes among Home Economics lecturers in Delta State, guided by two research questions. Research Question 1 explored how dominant or authoritarian leadership affects family conflict, trust, and relational stability, while Research Question 2 examined how shared leadership influences family communication,

cooperation, and emotional bonding. The findings revealed that dominant leadership increases conflict, reduces trust, and destabilizes relationships, whereas shared leadership promotes communication, cooperation, and emotional bonding. Both research questions were clearly answered, demonstrating the contrasting impacts of authoritarian and shared leadership approaches. Gender and institutional location did not significantly influence these perceptions, indicating the universal nature of these leadership effects.

The implications of these findings are significant for family management and professional practice. They suggest the need for training and interventions that cultivate inclusive and participatory leadership within households, emphasizing consultation, shared decision-making, and cooperative engagement. For policymakers and educators, the study highlights the importance of equipping Home Economics professionals with leadership skills that strengthen family cohesion, emotional well-being, and sustainable relational outcomes. Ultimately, adopting appropriate leadership strategies within households can enhance trust, harmony, and resilience, contributing to stronger and more sustainable family systems.

Recommendations: The following recommendations were made from the findings of this study.

1. Home Economics lecturers should adopt inclusive and consultative household leadership practices to promote trust, harmony, and relational stability.
2. Home Economics lecturers should implement collaborative decision-making and equitable task-sharing at home to strengthen family cohesion and emotional connectedness.

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CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

NUTRITION, DISABILITY, AND LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS IN NIGERIA'S ECONOMY

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Introduction

Nigeria's economy presents a paradox of immense potential juxtaposed with profound challenges. Despite being Africa's largest economy and endowed with vast human and natural resources, for instance, the oil sector contributes less than 10% to GDP but dominates exports and government revenue, creating a volatile, rentier economy. Successive governments have failed to diversify, leaving the country vulnerable to commodity price shocks. As noted by Budget (2023), debt servicing consumed 96% of federal government revenue in 2022, eviscerating fiscal space for critical social investments. This macro-economic reality trickles down to households: food inflation reached 35.41% year-on-year in January 2024 (NBS, 2024), pushing a basic, nutritious diet out of reach for the average family. The economy, as currently managed, systematically produces poverty and food insecurity. The nation grapples with high inflation, unemployment, currency depreciation, and heavy dependence on oil revenues. Infrastructure deficits, inconsistent economic policies, and systemic corruption have stifled productive sectors like agriculture and manufacturing. The result is an economy that fails to generate enough jobs or lift millions out of poverty, creating a vulnerable population highly susceptible to shocks.

The Effect of Leadership Dynamics on the Populace, Vis-à-Vis Persons with Disabilities

Leadership dynamics in Nigeria have historically marginalized vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities (PWDs). Policies are often not inclusive, and implementation of existing disability laws—such as the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018 was a landmark, its implementation epitomizes what Ojukwu and Akinbola (2019) term "legislative

optimism without executive will." The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, established by the Act, remains critically underfunded and politically weak. This neglect is symptomatic of a broader governance failure to view citizenship through a lens of equity. Consequently, as documented by Ebuenyi et al. (2020), PWDs in Nigeria face intersecting barriers: only 2% have access to assistive devices, and societal stigma, reinforced by state inaction, locks them out of education and the labour market, perpetuating a cycle of dependency. PWDs face disproportionate barriers in education, healthcare, employment, and social participation. This exclusion is not a reflection of their capabilities but a direct consequence of leadership that fails to prioritize inclusion, accessibility, and equity.

Etiology of Disability with Emphasis on Nutrition

Disability arises from various causes: congenital conditions, disease, injury, and importantly, malnutrition. Nutritional deficiencies, particularly in early childhood, can lead to irreversible disabilities. For example:

- Vitamin A deficiency can cause blindness.
- Iodine deficiency during pregnancy can result in congenital hypothyroidism and intellectual impairments in children.
- Severe acute malnutrition can lead to developmental delays, stunting, and cognitive deficits.

In Nigeria, malnutrition remains a silent crisis, driven by poverty, food insecurity, and poor maternal and child health services. The etiology of disability in Nigeria is heavily skewed towards preventable causes, with malnutrition as a primary, underlying factor. Nigerian epidemiological studies consistently highlight this link.

- Maternal and Child Undernutrition: Nigeria has the second-highest burden of stunting globally, with 37% of children under five affected (NBS & UNICEF, 2021). Stunting is not just short stature; it signifies chronic undernutrition that causes irreversible cognitive deficits, lower educational attainment, and reduced lifetime earnings—a form of developmental disability (Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007).
- Specific Micronutrient Deficiencies: Oguntibeju (2012) highlights that vitamin A deficiency, affecting nearly 30% of Nigerian preschool children, is a leading cause of preventable childhood blindness. Iodine deficiency disorders, though improved through salt iodization, persist in several regions, threatening neurodevelopment.
- The Intergenerational Cycle: An undernourished girl child is likely to become an undernourished mother,

perpetuating the cycle. This is compounded by poor access to antenatal care and low rates of exclusive breastfeeding (29%, NBS & UNICEF, 2021), setting the stage for adverse birth outcomes and disabilities.

Importance of Nutrition in Averting Disability: The Nigerian Evidence

The economic argument for investing in nutrition is overwhelming, and Nigerian data supports it. A cost-benefit analysis by The Economist Intelligence Unit (2014) for Nigeria estimated that undernutrition cost the economy over $1.5 billion annually in lost productivity. Conversely, every Naira invested in reducing stunting yields a return of N18 in future increased productivity. Programs like the Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) have proven effective in Nigeria, yet they remain pilot projects, not scaled national priorities. Leadership that fails to act on this evidence is wilfully neglecting a high-return investment for cheap political capital elsewhere. Adequate nutrition is a powerful preventive tool against disability. Ensuring pregnant women and young children have access to essential nutrients safeguards fatal and child development. Programs promoting breastfeeding, fortified foods, and micronutrient supplementation can drastically reduce the incidence of nutrition-related disabilities. It is a cost-effective investment in human capital that pays dividends in health, cognitive ability, and productivity.

PWDs as Economic Contributors, Not Merely Consumers

A pervasive, harmful narrative in Nigeria—often reinforced by societal attitudes and policy neglect—is that persons with disabilities are primarily economic consumers or burdens. This is fundamentally flawed. Disability is not inability; the barriers PWDs face are constructed by an inaccessible environment and exclusionary systems, which are ultimately failures of leadership. With the right support, accommodations, and opportunities, PWDs can be vibrant contributors to the economy as entrepreneurs, employees, innovators, and
taxpayers.

Global Examples of Leadership that Empowers PWDs

Several countries demonstrate how proactive leadership can transform the status of PWDs. For instance:

- United States: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates accessibility and non-discrimination, enabling greater workforce participation.
- United Kingdom: Through supportive legislation and programs like Access to Work, PWDs are integrated into the economy.
- Rwanda: Post-genocide leadership has made inclusion a national priority, with policies promoting disability rights and economic participation. The country mainstreamed disability inclusion into their post-genocide Vision 2050, with quotas in parliament and targeted livelihood programmes. Kenya's Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) law reserves 30% of public procurement for youth, women, and PWDs, directly fostering entrepreneurship. These are not acts of charity but strategic economic policies that recognize inclusion drives growth. Nigerian leadership, conversely, remains stuck in a paternalistic, welfare-based model that disempowers and excludes.

These examples show that when leadership commits to inclusion, PWDs add significant value to the economy. PWDs as an Untapped Economic Asset

The perception of PWDs as "economic consumers" is a social construct amplified by policy failure. Nigerian scholars like Abang (1988), in seminal work, argued that disability is often a consequence of societal failures in prevention and rehabilitation, not just individual fate. The narrative of dependency serves to justify neglect. In reality, Nigerian PWDs are entrepreneurs, artisans, and professionals who navigate immense obstacles. The National Bureau of Statistics (2018) disability survey, though limited, indicated that a significant proportion of PWDs are engaged in economic activities, primarily in the informal sector, but their productivity is hampered by inaccessible infrastructure and discrimination. The "fault" lies not in their capacity but in a leadership that refuses to level the playing field.

Leadership Dynamics: Effects on the Economy, Nutrition, and Disability Rates in Nigeria

This chapter posits a direct, causal chain rooted in poor leadership dynamics; the vicious cycle, a failure of leadership, and a cascade of Consequences

1. Poor Economic Governance → Macroeconomic instability, corruption, and misaligned budgets.
2. Underfunded Social Sectors → Collapse of primary healthcare, lack of extension services for agriculture, and crumbling public education.
3. Resultant Food and Health Insecurity → Soaring malnutrition rates (wasting at 7%, NBS & UNICEF, 2021).
4. Increased Incidence of Preventable Disabilities → From birth defects due to maternal malnutrition to childhood cognitive impairments.
5. Exclusionary Social & Economic Systems → PWDs are denied the tools for productivity.
6. Diminished National Human Capital & Productivity → Weakening the overall economy, reinforcing Step 1.

This is not fate; it is the predictable outcome of specific policy choices and leadership failures over decades. Nigeria's leadership failures have a cascading effect. Poor economic management reduces household incomes, leading to food insecurity and poor nutrition. Malnutrition increases the prevalence of disability, adding to the population requiring support. Meanwhile, the failure to create an inclusive economy means that many PWDs cannot work, perpetuating dependency and reducing overall economic output. It is a vicious cycle: poor leadership → weak economy → malnutrition → disability → exclusion → further economic strain.

Conclusion

The intersection of malnutrition, disability, and economic stagnation is Nigeria's most profound developmental challenge. It is a crisis manufactured by governance. The way forward requires a radical departure from business-as-usual

towards deliberate, accountable, and inclusive leadership. This leadership must view nutrition security as non-negotiable infrastructure and disability inclusion as a core economic strategy, not a sidebar social issue. The goal must be to break the intergenerational transfer of poverty and impairment. The nexus between nutrition, disability, and Nigeria's economic stagnation is fundamentally a governance issue. Breaking this cycle requires a transformative leadership approach that:

- Prioritizes human capital development, starting with nutrition and preventive healthcare.
- Enforces and expands inclusive policies for PWDs, ensuring accessibility and opportunity.
- Diversifies the economy to create jobs and reduce poverty.

Leadership must shift from patronage and short-term gains to long-term, equitable development that leaves no one behind.

Recommendations

- Strengthen Nutrition Interventions: Scale up maternal and child nutrition programs, promote food fortification, and support sustainable agriculture to improve food security.
- Implement and Monitor Disability Laws: Fully enforce the Disability Act, with budget allocations for accessibility, education, and vocational training for PWDs.
- Promote Inclusive Economic Policies: Introduce incentives for businesses to employ PWDs, support disability entrepreneurship, and ensure public procurement includes disability-inclusive businesses.
- Improve Governance and Accountability: Leaders must be held accountable for inclusive development. Civil society and the media should advocate vigorously for the rights and inclusion of PWDs.
- Learn from Global Best Practices: Adapt successful models of disability inclusion and economic integration from other nations to Nigeria's context.

In summary, Nigeria's path to prosperity requires leadership that sees nutrition as foundational, disability inclusion as non-negotiable, and every citizen as a potential contributor to the economy. Only then can the nation turn its vast potential into shared, sustainable progress.

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CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

REIMAGINING TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: LEADERSHIP, POLICY GAPS, AND THE QUEST FOR PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

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Introduction

Teacher education in Nigeria occupies a paradoxical position within the national educational system. Although policy discourse repeatedly underscores the critical role of quality teaching in driving educational transformation, the institutions primarily responsible for preparing teachers—especially Colleges of Education—operate under systemic constraints that limit their ability to attract, retain, and motivate both students and academic staff. This paradox reflects a broader policy reality in which teacher education institutions are structurally subordinate within Nigeria's higher education hierarchy, receiving lower funding, reduced prestige, and weaker professional recognition compared to universities and polytechnics.

The declining appeal of teacher education as a career path is well documented in both scholarly and policy literature. Many prospective students perceive Colleges of Education as a fallback option rather than a first-choice profession, while academic staff encounter limited research opportunities, restricted career progression, and reduced professional satisfaction (Akindutire & Ekundayo, 2012). This erosion of institutional attractiveness is the outcome of what can be described as policy asymmetry: the uneven allocation of resources, professional incentives, and symbolic validation across different tiers of tertiary education in Nigeria. Such asymmetry manifests in disparities in funding, access to research infrastructure, remuneration, conditions of service, and professional recognition mechanisms, including the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme.

A particularly striking example of this policy asymmetry is the exclusion of College of Education graduates from automatic NYSC eligibility, despite holding Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) qualifications. This exclusion is more than procedural; it symbolizes the diminished professional legitimacy assigned to teacher education credentials within the national hierarchy (Adeyemi, 2011). The effects of this devaluation extend beyond student enrolment and institutional sustainability, influencing the professional identity and institutional commitment of lecturers who navigate structurally disadvantaged workplaces. The depth of this crisis is

underscored by a revealing pattern: lecturers frequently choose to enroll their own children in universities rather than in the Colleges of Education where they teach—a phenomenon that highlights the perceived inferiority of these institutions.

This chapter engages with these persistent challenges in Nigerian teacher education, drawing particularly on the scholarship and administrative experience of Professor Josephine E. Anene-Okeakwa in institutional leadership, professional development, and sustainability of Colleges of Education. It contends that the loss of aspirational and professional appeal in teacher education is not accidental but the result of systemic policy asymmetries that disadvantage Colleges of Education, weaken lecturer motivation, and threaten institutional sustainability. Recent government interventions, such as the dual mandate policy enabling Colleges of Education to award degrees in addition to the NCE, represent meaningful steps toward institutional upgrading; however, more comprehensive structural reforms and policy attention are essential to restore the aspirational and professional value of teacher education.

The chapter is organized into seven substantive sections. Following this introduction, Section Two provides conceptual clarifications for key terms including aspirational education, policy asymmetry, professional recognition, career sustainability, and institutional hierarchy, while establishing the theoretical frameworks guiding the analysis. Section Three examines the institutional hierarchy within Nigerian higher education, exploring how the university-polytechnic-college structure shapes funding, prestige, and career mobility. Section Four analyses policy asymmetry, detailing disparities in remuneration, research opportunities, and career incentives affecting academic staff. Section Five investigates professional recognition, with a focus on the NYSC issue and its dual economic and symbolic implications. Section Six considers how these structural conditions influence lecturer motivation, professional identity, and institutional commitment. Section Seven discusses leadership responsibilities and strategies for reimagining teacher education as an aspirational profession. The conclusion synthesizes these arguments, emphasizing the critical role of policy reform in reversing the marginalization of teacher education institutions.

Conceptual Clarifications

Before delving into the main analysis, it is essential to define several core concepts that underpin this chapter. Although familiar in educational discourse, these terms require precise interpretation within the Nigerian context to ensure clarity and a shared analytical framework.

Aspirational Education

Aspirational education refers to learning pathways perceived by students, families, and communities as avenues for social mobility, professional recognition, and long-term economic security (Buchmann & Dalton, 2002). Similarly, an aspirational profession is one actively sought for anticipated social respect and material reward,

rather than as a fallback. Historically, teaching in Nigeria embodied such aspiration, with colonial-era teachers enjoying community authority, economic stability, and intellectual prestige (Fafunwa, 1974). However, contemporary economic shifts, professional hierarchies, and policy changes have diminished teaching's aspirational appeal, especially compared to professions like law, medicine, engineering, and technology-driven fields (Akindutire & Ekundayo, 2012).

Policy Asymmetry

Policy asymmetry refers to uneven distribution of policy support, resources, and regulatory benefits across educational institutions that are ostensibly similar. In Nigeria, this is evident in the divergent treatment of universities, polytechnics, and Colleges of Education (Okebukola, 2015). Universities dominate the hierarchy, receiving higher budgets, research support, and political backing (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2010), polytechnics occupy a middle position, and Colleges of Education remain under-resourced. This imbalance reflects entrenched assumptions about the relative value and intellectual rigor of different tertiary institutions.

Professional Recognition

Professional recognition includes both formal credentialing and societal validation of occupational legitimacy (Freidson, 2001). Formal recognition covers certification, licensure, salary scales, and eligibility for programmes such as the NYSC, while informal recognition relates to social esteem and community respect. In professions like medicine or law, these forms of recognition reinforce one another. For Nigerian teachers, however, a disconnect exists: formal qualifications do not always translate into consistent social or institutional acknowledgment (Adeyemi, 2011). The exclusion of NCE holders from automatic NYSC participation illustrates this ambiguity, undermining the perceived legitimacy of teacher education credentials relative to university degrees.

Career Sustainability

Career sustainability denotes the ability of professionals to maintain long-term engagement in a profession without economic precarity, burnout, or barriers to advancement (Day & Gu, 2010). Sustainable careers offer predictable salary growth, professional development, institutional support, and upward mobility. In the context of Colleges of Education, these conditions are often absent, resulting in limited remuneration, scarce research funding, weak infrastructure, and restricted career progression compared to universities (Ololube, 2006).

Institutional Hierarchy

Institutional hierarchy describes the ranking of educational institutions based on perceived prestige, resources, and policy priority (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In Nigeria, this hierarchy is evident: universities at the top, polytechnics in the middle, and Colleges of Education at the bottom (Saint et al., 2003). This

stratification affects student admission quality, staff recruitment, research capacity, and societal respect, and helps explain why teacher education has lost its aspirational appeal.

These concepts are more than theoretical—they reflect the lived experiences of students, lecturers, administrators, and policymakers navigating teacher education in Nigeria. They form the analytical lens for understanding structural challenges and policy interventions needed for revitalization.

Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter employs institutional theory to explain how hierarchies in Nigerian higher education persist through cultural norms, historical precedent, and path dependency, often maintaining inequities despite formal regulations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008). Institutional isomorphism, where organizations mimic established structures to gain legitimacy, perpetuates inequality. Professional identity theory (Beijaard et al., 2004) is used to explore how lecturers' self-perceptions are shaped by institutional positioning and societal recognition. Diminished institutional value erodes professional identity, motivation, and career commitment. Finally, Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital (1986) helps understand how credentials convey social legitimacy; the exclusion of NCE holders from NYSC participation reflects the denial of symbolic capital, positioning teacher education as inferior in the national credentialing hierarchy.

Institutional Hierarchy in Nigerian Higher Education

Nigeria's higher education system is marked by a distinct hierarchy that shapes funding distribution, societal perceptions, and career mobility. At the top are universities, followed by polytechnics, with Colleges of Education occupying the base. Although all three are formally recognised as tertiary institutions with unique mandates, they differ significantly in policy focus, resource allocation, and public esteem (Okebukola, 2015).

Universities

Universities have historically held a dominant position in Nigeria's education landscape. Modeled after colonial-era institutions, they were established as centres for intellectual development, professional training, and elite formation. Universities are seen as hubs of research, innovation, and academic excellence, with graduates presumed to possess both theoretical insight and professional competence. This perception is reinforced by preferential funding and labour market biases that prioritise university degrees over other tertiary qualifications (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2010).

Polytechnics

Polytechnics occupy a middle tier in the hierarchy. Designed to provide technical and vocational education, they have struggled with recognition and

professional parity. The National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) are often not treated as equivalent to university degrees, especially in public employment and postgraduate admission processes. Despite official policies asserting their equivalence, structural barriers remain (Ogundipe et al., 2014).

Colleges of Education

Colleges of Education occupy the lowest tier. Primarily focused on producing NCE-qualified teachers for primary and junior secondary schools, they are traditionally viewed as institutions for pedagogical training rather than research or scholarship. Unlike universities, Colleges of Education have limited research mandates and receive significantly lower funding per student, restricting their ability to attract highly qualified staff, develop research infrastructure, or offer competitive salaries (Adeyemi, 2011).

Implications Of The Hierarchy

Student Preferences and Enrollment Patterns

The hierarchy strongly influences student choices. Most aspirants prioritize universities, seeing them as gateways to social mobility, professional recognition, and economic security. Colleges of Education are often chosen as fallback options when university or polytechnic admission is unattainable, a trend reinforced by the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) system (Afe, 2006).

Recruitment and Retention of Academic Staff

Institutional ranking also affects staff recruitment. Scholars with doctoral qualifications typically prefer university appointments due to better research opportunities, postgraduate supervision, and higher remuneration. Colleges of Education face challenges in attracting and retaining highly qualified personnel. Staff often view positions as temporary, seeking eventual transfers to universities, and rarely enrol their own children in these institutions, reflecting a systemic confidence gap.

Public Discourse and Policy Priority

The hierarchy shapes policy debates and public discourse. Discussions on higher education reform predominantly focus on universities, emphasizing research funding, global competitiveness, and academic excellence, while Colleges of Education receive marginal attention (Saint et al., 2003). Budget allocations mirror this pattern, with universities consistently receiving the bulk of federal and state education funding, leaving Colleges of Education chronically underfunded.

Policy Asymmetry and Career Incentives

The hierarchical structure of Nigeria's higher education system is reinforced by policy asymmetry—the uneven distribution of resources, professional incentives, and regulatory advantages across institutions. This imbalance appears in pay

scales, research funding, union influence, and career advancement opportunities (Ololube et al., 2013).

One of the most apparent forms of policy asymmetry is remuneration. University lecturers benefit from the Consolidated University Academic Salary Structure (CONUASS), which offers relatively high salaries along with allowances for research, supervision, and professional development. In contrast, polytechnic and College of Education lecturers are governed by the Consolidated Polytechnic and Colleges of Education Academic Salary Structure (CONPCASS), which provides lower base pay and fewer research-related benefits. As a result, university positions are financially more attractive, incentivising qualified academics to prefer universities over Colleges of Education (Ejiogu & Onyene, 2007).

Policy asymmetry also affects access to research funding and professional development. Universities typically receive the bulk of grants from agencies such as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), whereas Colleges of Education obtain only minimal allocations. This limits lecturers' ability to conduct research, attend conferences, or publish in reputable journals (TETFund, 2020).

Union strength further demonstrates this disparity. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) wields significant influence, often securing better pay and working conditions. Conversely, the Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) has limited political leverage, with strikes attracting less public attention and achieving fewer gains (Okojie, 2013).

Career mobility is another affected dimension. University lecturers benefit from clear promotion pathways based on research, teaching, and administrative performance. Promotion opportunities in Colleges of Education are less defined and constrained by limited institutional resources. Additionally, upward mobility from Colleges of Education to universities is common, while movement in the opposite direction is rare (Adeyemi, 2011).

Collectively, these asymmetries make employment in Colleges of Education appear economically and professionally restrictive. Many new PhD holders view such positions as temporary, planning to move to better-resourced universities as soon as possible. This cycle contributes to chronic staff instability, with Colleges of Education often serving as stepping stones for academics seeking university appointments.

Professional Recognition and the NYSC Question

Professional recognition serves as both a material and symbolic indicator of occupational legitimacy. In Nigeria, eligibility for the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is a prominent marker. Since its establishment in 1973, the NYSC has offered graduates structured service, monthly allowances, employment networking opportunities, and a discharge certificate frequently required for formal sector employment. However, NCE holders have historically been excluded, while university degree holders enjoy automatic eligibility (Umo, 2014).

The policy rationale for this exclusion is that the NYSC targets degree-awarding institutions, and the NCE, as a sub-degree qualification, does not meet this criterion. Yet the NCE involves three years of post-secondary, structured academic training, including teaching practice, and qualifies graduates for teaching in primary and junior secondary schools. In scope and rigor, the NCE is comparable to many bachelor's programmes, yet NCE holders are denied national recognition afforded to degree holders.

This exclusion has tangible consequences. NYSC participants receive a monthly allowance during their service year, providing economic stability. NCE graduates must transition to professional life without this support. Moreover, the NYSC discharge certificate is often a requirement for formal sector jobs, leaving NCE holders at a disadvantage despite having legally recognised qualifications (Adeyemi, 2011).

Symbolically, NYSC participation conveys professional adulthood and full citizenship. Exclusion relegates NCE holders to a lesser status, suggesting that, despite legal validity, their qualifications do not command the same recognition as university degrees (Umo, 2014).

For lecturers in Colleges of Education, observing that university graduates enjoy better recognition and employment prospects while their trainees face structural disadvantages affects professional identity. This dynamic can undermine institutional loyalty, diminish motivation, and reduce the intrinsic rewards of academic work.

Lecturer Motivation, Professional Identity, and Institutional Commitment

The structural conditions described in previous sections converge to shape the professional experiences, identities, and motivations of lecturers within Colleges of Education. Lecturer motivation is fundamentally shaped by the interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Ololube, 2006). Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal satisfactions associated with teaching and intellectual engagement. Extrinsic motivation includes tangible rewards such as salary, promotion opportunities, and professional recognition. In well-functioning professional environments, these motivations reinforce one another. In contexts where extrinsic conditions are consistently poor, however, intrinsic motivation alone may prove insufficient to sustain long-term professional engagement.

Lecturers in Colleges of Education frequently report that whilst they entered the profession with genuine commitment to teacher education, their enthusiasm is gradually eroded by persistent structural challenges. These challenges include inadequate salaries that fail to keep pace with inflation, limited access to research funding, heavy teaching loads that leave little time for scholarship, and administrative environments characterised by resource scarcity (Akindutire & Ekundayo, 2012). Over time, these conditions generate professional fatigue, reducing the psychological rewards associated with academic work.

Professional identity is similarly affected by the institutional positioning of Colleges of Education. For lecturers in these institutions, professional identity is frequently marked by ambivalence. They identify as academics engaged in important work preparing the next generation of teachers, yet they are acutely aware that their professional contributions are accorded less recognition than those of university colleagues. This awareness is reinforced through disparities in salary and research support, exclusion from high-profile academic networks, and limited representation in national education policymaking (Ejiogu & Onyene, 2007).

The psychological impact of this devaluation should not be underestimated. When validation is consistently withheld, individuals may internalise perceptions of inadequacy. Some lecturers respond by disengaging from institutional life, performing teaching duties with minimal enthusiasm. Others pursue exit strategies, seeking transfers to universities or positions elsewhere. Perhaps most revealing is the pattern whereby lecturers and staff within Colleges of Education enroll their own children in universities rather than in the institutions where they teach. This behaviour demonstrates a fundamental lack of confidence in the institutions they serve and reveals the depth of professional disillusionment.

Institutional commitment, defined as the degree of loyalty individuals feel toward their employing organisations, is similarly compromised under conditions of policy asymmetry and professional devaluation (Ololube et al., 2013). Lecturers observe that their institutions receive minimal policy attention and budgetary support, that career advancement is slow, and that their professional expertise is underutilised in broader educational policy discussions. Under these circumstances, institutional commitment weakens, and lecturers increasingly view their employment as transactional: a source of income but not a site of deep professional belonging.

The implications of weakened lecturer motivation and institutional commitment extend beyond individual career trajectories to affect institutional functioning and educational quality. When lecturers are disengaged, student learning suffers. Teaching becomes mechanistic, mentorship relationships are shallow, and pedagogical innovation stagnates. Research output declines as lecturers lack motivation and resources for sustained scholarly productivity. Over time, these dynamics create a vicious cycle: institutional underperformance reinforces external perceptions of inferiority, which in turn justifies continued policy neglect.

Leadership and the Reimagining of Teacher Education as an Aspirational Profession

The challenges facing teacher education in Nigeria are structural and systemic, but they are not immutable. Reimagining teacher education as an aspirational profession requires leadership at multiple levels: institutional leadership within Colleges of Education, ministerial and agency leadership within federal and state governments, and broader political leadership committed to educational transformation (Okebukola, 2015).

Institutional leadership within Colleges of Education plays a critical role in navigating external constraints whilst fostering internal cultures of excellence and professional commitment. Provosts and deans must advocate for increased budgetary allocations whilst ensuring that existing funds are used efficiently. This includes prioritising investments in research infrastructure, supporting lecturers' professional development, and creating incentive structures that reward scholarly productivity and pedagogical innovation (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2010).

However, institutional leadership alone cannot overcome structural disadvantages imposed by policy asymmetry. Federal and state governments, through the Federal Ministry of Education and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), bear primary responsibility for establishing policy frameworks that either enable or constrain institutional success. Ministerial and agency leadership must confront the reality that current policies systematically disadvantage Colleges of Education and must take deliberate steps to redress these imbalances. This includes revising funding formulas to ensure equitable resource distribution, expanding access to research grants, and harmonising salary structures to eliminate disparities between university and College of Education lecturers.

One critical area for policy intervention is professional recognition, particularly regarding NYSC eligibility. Policy leadership must address the exclusion of NCE holders from automatic NYSC participation, either by extending eligibility or by developing alternative mechanisms of national recognition tailored to teacher education graduates. Such recognition would signal that teacher education is valued as a legitimate profession, deserving of validation accorded to other tertiary qualifications.

Another area for policy reform concerns the status and structure of Colleges of Education themselves. Recent government initiatives, including the dual mandate policy that allows Colleges of Education to award degrees alongside the NCE, represent important steps toward institutional upgrading (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022). The dual mandate policy offers a pathway for Colleges of Education to evolve into degree-awarding institutions, potentially eliminating the credentialing ambiguity that currently marginalises teacher education. However, implementation of the dual mandate has been uneven, and much more policy attention, infrastructure investment, and advocacy are needed to ensure that this initiative achieves its transformative potential. Colleges of Education require substantial support to develop degree programmes that meet accreditation standards, to recruit and retain faculty qualified to teach at degree level, and to establish research infrastructures capable of supporting degree-level scholarship.

Beyond structural reforms, leadership must also address cultural and discursive dimensions of professional recognition. National education discourse in Nigeria often marginalises teaching, portraying it as a low-status occupation. Political leaders and policymakers must actively counter this narrative, articulating

a vision of teaching as a profession requiring high levels of skill and commitment (Saint et al., 2003). This includes celebrating outstanding teachers and ensuring that teacher voices are included in national conversations about education policy.

Professional associations and unions also have leadership responsibilities. COEASU and related organisations must continue to advocate for improved working conditions and policy reforms. However, advocacy must be strategic and evidence-based, building coalitions with other educational stakeholders and civil society organisations (Okojie, 2013).

Reimagining teacher education as an aspirational profession also requires attention to career pathways and professional development. Current systems often treat teaching as a terminal occupation with limited opportunities for advancement. Leadership must create structures that support career progression, including pathways from classroom teaching to educational administration, curriculum development, and academic leadership. Professional development programmes should be robust and accessible, enabling teachers and teacher educators to continually update their knowledge and skills (Ololube, 2006).

Ultimately, reimagining teacher education is not solely a technical challenge but a moral and political one. It requires confronting questions about whose knowledge and whose labour are valued within Nigerian society, and it demands a willingness to redistribute resources and recognition in ways that challenge entrenched hierarchies. Quality teaching is the foundation of educational equity and economic development. If Nigeria is serious about achieving these goals, then teacher education must be treated not as a subordinate sector but as a national priority deserving of sustained investment and professional respect.

Conclusion

This chapter argues that teacher education in Nigeria has steadily lost prestige due to policy imbalances that marginalise Colleges of Education. Positioned at the lowest tier of the higher education system, these institutions face limited funding, weaker research support, poorer remuneration, restricted career progression, and diminished societal recognition. The exclusion of NCE holders from automatic NYSC participation further deepens both material and symbolic marginalisation, lowering morale and weakening professional identity.

The crisis is reflected in the telling reality that many lecturers prefer universities for their own children, signalling declining confidence in teacher education pathways and the urgent need for reform.

These challenges are policy-driven and therefore reversible. The dual mandate policy allowing Colleges of Education to award degrees is a positive step, but uneven implementation and persistent structural inequalities remain. Sustainable reform requires harmonised salary structures, equitable funding, stronger research support, recognition mechanisms such as NYSC eligibility (or credible alternatives), and full operationalisation of the dual mandate.

Echoing the professional legacy of Josephine E. Anene-Okeakwa, these concerns reflect lived realities for educators and communities nationwide. Repositioning teacher education as a respected and attractive profession demands coordinated institutional and political leadership grounded in equity and national development.

Ultimately, meaningful transformation depends on aligning policy commitments with resource allocation. If teaching is central to national progress, institutions that prepare teachers must be prioritised accordingly. Nigeria must choose between continued marginalisation and a deliberate reform agenda that restores Colleges of Education as vital pillars of sustainable and respected professional training.

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CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND MENTORSHIP IN SCIENCE EDUCATION: A FRAMEWORK FOR INTEGRATING PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION AND CURRICULUM REFORM

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Introduction

Science education in Nigeria is not constrained by the absence of policy direction. National curriculum frameworks, competency standards, and articulated learning outcomes are widely available and frequently benchmarked against global expectations. Yet, despite this policy abundance, a critical dimension remains insufficiently interrogated: the human systems required to transform written reform into lived classroom practice. The central questions are not merely about what should be taught, but about who guides early-career science teachers, who equips departmental leaders to manage reform pressures, and who sustains pedagogical innovation within resource-constrained environments.

Leadership in science education must therefore be conceptualized beyond formal administrative roles. It encompasses the capacity to shape instructional priorities, defend pedagogical integrity against excessive bureaucratic pressures, and position science teaching as intellectually rigorous and inquiry-driven rather than examination-centered routine. Such leadership may reside in department heads, curriculum coordinators, experienced classroom teachers, and even informal professional networks. In parallel, mentorship should not be viewed as a remedial intervention for struggling practitioners. Instead, it functions as a formative and identity-shaping process—particularly vital in contexts where the transition from pre-service preparation to classroom realities is abrupt and often discouraging.

The Nigerian educational landscape presents structural challenges that significantly influence how leadership and mentorship operate. Overcrowded classrooms, limited laboratory infrastructure, heavy teaching loads, and persistent examination pressures constrain the implementation of inquiry-based and student-centered pedagogies. Under such conditions, leadership and mentorship are not optional enhancements; they are essential mechanisms for sustaining teacher motivation, professional growth, and instructional quality.

Empirical evidence underscores these concerns. Ogunleye and Babajide (2023) observe that professional development for science teachers in Lagos State remains sporadic and weakly institutionalized, often limited to isolated workshops rather

than continuous learning structures. Similarly, Aina and Adedo (2022) report that mentorship practices in Southwest Nigerian teacher education institutions are largely informal, relying on personal relationships instead of structured frameworks with clear goals and accountability. Furthermore, Peter et al., (2021) argue that science curriculum reforms frequently falter not because teachers resist change, but because reform is treated as a technical adjustment—adopting new materials or strategies—rather than as a leadership-driven, culture-dependent process requiring sustained professional support and collective meaning-making.

Against this backdrop, this chapter advances a framework that positions leadership dynamics and structured mentorship as central levers for integrating pedagogical innovation with curriculum reform in science education. It argues that meaningful reform depends not only on well-designed curricula, but on deliberate systems of professional influence, support, and shared responsibility that enable teachers to translate policy aspirations into transformative classroom practice.

This chapter presents a conceptual framework of leadership dynamics, mentorship, pedagogical innovation, and curriculum reform in science education. It does not report original empirical data. Rather, it integrates established theories and contextual research, particularly from Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa to propose a framework for understanding how these elements interact in practice. The framework acknowledges that educational improvement is fundamentally relational and cultural, not merely technical or procedural.

Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations

Leadership Dynamics in Science Education

Educational leadership transcends administrative coordination; it is fundamentally about shaping institutional conditions that enable teacher effectiveness and optimize student learning outcomes. As Shaked (2020) suggests, leadership is exercised through the creation of supportive professional environments rather than mere procedural management. Within science education, this becomes particularly significant because the discipline demands inquiry, experimentation, collaboration, and continuous adaptation to emerging knowledge. Leadership dynamics therefore influence not only organizational efficiency but also the culture of mentorship, innovation, and pedagogical renewal.

Leadership theories provide analytical lenses for understanding how these dynamics unfold in practice. Transformational leadership emphasizes vision-building, intellectual stimulation, and motivational engagement (Bush & Glover, 2014). In science education contexts, such leadership can cultivate a climate where teachers feel encouraged to adopt inquiry-based strategies, integrate emerging technologies, and mentor less-experienced colleagues. By fostering collective purpose and professional confidence, transformational leaders help sustain instructional creativity.

Instructional leadership, in contrast, concentrates on the core business of schooling—teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2011). It involves curriculum alignment, classroom observation, feedback systems, and the systematic monitoring of student achievement. In science classrooms, where conceptual clarity and practical engagement are essential, instructional leadership ensures that pedagogy remains rigorous and responsive. Leaders who prioritize instructional quality provide structured mentorship, guide reflective practice, and promote evidence-based teaching methods that enhance student outcomes.

Distributed leadership further broadens the framework by recognizing leadership as a shared, relational process rather than a positional authority (Spillane, 2006). In science education, this perspective encourages peer mentoring, collaborative lesson design, and collective responsibility for laboratory safety, curriculum implementation, and innovation. When leadership is distributed effectively, science departments become professional learning communities rather than hierarchical units.

However, in the Nigerian educational landscape, a persistent gap exists between leadership theory and practice. Although policy rhetoric emphasizes excellence, innovation, and transformative vision, school leaders are frequently preoccupied with administrative compliance—enrollment management, infrastructure maintenance, examination logistics, and ministry reporting requirements (Adeyemi, 2022). These operational demands often crowd out instructional mentorship. Teachers may receive limited feedback on classroom practice or support in adapting science curricula to contemporary realities. Moreover, attempts at distributed leadership may falter when additional responsibilities are perceived as burdens without institutional recognition, incentives, or structural backing.

This tension reveals a critical structural issue: leadership effectiveness in science education depends not merely on individual style but on systemic support, workload balance, and professional recognition. Where administrative overload dominates, mentorship becomes incidental rather than intentional. Conversely, where leaders strategically integrate administrative coordination with instructional supervision, mentorship becomes embedded within the school culture.

Understanding leadership dynamics in science education is therefore indispensable because they shape the ecology of professional growth. Effective leaders navigate competing demands—accountability and autonomy, standardization and contextual flexibility, compliance and innovation. By striking this balance, they create environments in which science teachers feel intellectually supported, professionally valued, and pedagogically empowered.

Ultimately, leadership dynamics determine whether science classrooms evolve into spaces of experimentation, collaboration, and continuous improvement, or remain constrained by bureaucratic rigidity and hierarchical inertia. Thoughtful navigation

of these dynamics is central to building science education systems that are innovative, inclusive, and sustainably effective.

Mentorship in Science Education

Mentorship in science education is a sustained professional relationship in which experienced educators guide and support less experienced teachers. Beyond advice, it combines career guidance with emotional encouragement, helping teachers build practical skills, confidence, and reflective practice (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019). In science classrooms, mentorship assists teachers in managing complex subject content, applying innovative teaching strategies, and translating curriculum reforms into effective classroom practice.

Mentorship may be instructional (focused on lesson planning, laboratory work, and assessment), professional (centered on career growth and system navigation), or peer-based (collaborative support among colleagues). Strong mentorship increases teacher confidence, reflection, and willingness to adopt innovative methods. It also bridges the gap between policy and classroom practice, ultimately improving student engagement and achievement in science.

Its success depends heavily on leadership. School leaders who foster collaboration, allocate time and resources, and prioritize teacher development create conditions where mentorship thrives. In contrast, rigid administrative structures limit its impact. In Nigeria, although awareness of mentorship's value is growing, large class sizes, limited resources, and heavy workloads constrain sustained practice. Nonetheless, mentorship remains vital for strengthening instructional quality and supporting curriculum innovation.

Leadership Theories and Models in Science Education

Leadership theories explain how leaders influence others, while leadership models show how these ideas operate in practice. Together, they shape mentorship, teacher development, and curriculum reform in science education. James MacGregor Burns (1978) and Bernard M. Bass (1990) describe transformational leadership as vision-driven and inspirational, encouraging teacher motivation, innovation, and professional growth. Instructional leadership, associated with Philip Hallinger (2011), emphasizes direct involvement in curriculum supervision, lesson observation, and assessment to improve teaching and learning. James P. Spillane (2006) advances distributed leadership, which views leadership as shared across members of the school community, promoting collaboration and peer mentoring.

In practice, these approaches often overlap. In Nigerian science education, policy promotes innovation and excellence, yet leadership remains largely administrative. Mentorship is strongest when leaders balance vision with practical support, enabling teachers to collaborate, reflect, and innovate.

Leadership Dynamics and Science Teaching

Leadership influences science teaching both directly and indirectly. Directly, leaders determine resource allocation, professional development opportunities, timetabling, and curriculum emphasis. Indirectly, they shape school culture by encouraging—or discouraging—risk-taking, collaboration, and instructional experimentation. Oladejo et al. (2022) found that secondary schools in Southwest Nigeria where principals actively supported science departments recorded higher student engagement. Effective heads of department acted as bridges between policy demands and classroom realities, translating curriculum reforms into practical guidance and protecting space for innovation.

Leadership challenges often stem not from ill intent but from neglect or misalignment. Overburdened principals may unintentionally downplay instructional quality, while excessive focus on examination preparation discourages experimentation. Reforms imposed without implementation support can weaken both teacher morale and reform success. In summary, leadership and mentorship are interconnected forces in science education. When aligned and supportive, they strengthen teaching quality, promote innovation, and enhance student learning outcomes.

Pedagogical Innovation and Curriculum Reform in Science Education

Pedagogical Innovation in Context

Pedagogical innovation in science education includes inquiry-based learning, problem-based approaches, engagement with socio-scientific issues, technology integration, and culturally responsive teaching (Osborne & Dillon, 2008). In well-resourced systems, innovation often involves advanced technologies, fieldwork, and personalized learning pathways. In resource-constrained contexts, however, innovation tends to be adaptive and incremental. Jegede and Aikenhead (1999) describe this as collateral learning—bridging students' cultural knowledge with scientific concepts to enhance relevance and understanding.

In Nigeria, Adeyemo (2021) observed that secondary school science teachers improvised laboratory equipment, used locally available materials, and designed investigations around familiar phenomena to implement inquiry-based strategies. Despite requiring creativity and pedagogical sophistication, such context-sensitive innovations often remain overlooked in policy frameworks that prioritize standardized international models. Similarly, Ajani and Akindele (2022) identified tensions in integrating indigenous knowledge into science curricula without compromising scientific rigor or reinforcing simplistic "Western versus African" knowledge binaries.

Sustainable innovation depends on institutional backing—professional development, adequate resources, recognition systems, and curricular flexibility. Without such support, innovation becomes individualized and fragile, reliant on committed teachers and vulnerable to staff turnover.

Leadership and Curriculum Reform

Curriculum reform is typically initiated by national ministries, curriculum agencies, and international bodies, but its success depends on teachers' local interpretation and enactment. Leadership serves as the bridge between policy intent and classroom reality. Okebukola et al. (2021) argue that reforms falter when teachers are treated as passive implementers rather than professional interpreters capable of contextual adaptation. Effective reform-oriented leadership fosters dialogue, collective sense-making, and continuous professional learning. It also aligns assessment systems with new pedagogical goals to prevent contradictions between policy and practice.

The 2012 Nigerian science curriculum reform illustrates this dynamic. Although it emphasized inquiry-based learning and practical application, implementation varied widely. In schools where principals understood reform objectives and supported departmental leadership, changes were gradual and meaningful. Where leadership reduced reform to textbook updates and examination adjustments, substantive pedagogical change was minimal. The key difference lay less in resources and more in leadership capacity to promote organizational learning.

Leadership Dynamics, Mentorship, and Pedagogical Change

Leadership and mentorship are mutually reinforcing forces in science education. Leadership shapes school culture and direction, while mentorship translates vision into classroom practice. Transformational leaders inspire innovation by encouraging creative strategies and student-centered inquiry. Instructional leaders provide practical guidance—monitoring teaching quality, aligning lessons with curriculum goals, and clarifying reform expectations. Distributed leadership further strengthens innovation by empowering teachers to collaborate, contribute ideas, and share responsibility for improvement.

Mentorship operationalizes leadership vision. Experienced mentors support lesson planning, laboratory management, student assessment, and curriculum implementation. They also cultivate reflective practice, enabling teachers to evaluate and refine their approaches. When aligned, leadership and mentorship create the conditions for sustained innovation and effective reform.

In Nigerian science education, this alignment is especially critical. Although policy discourse promotes innovation and excellence, administrative burdens and hierarchical structures often constrain both leadership and mentorship. Where leaders prioritize teacher development and structured mentoring systems, innovation flourishes. Where leadership remains narrowly administrative and mentorship is weak, reforms stagnate.

Implications for Science Education

Cultivating a Supportive Professional Culture: Leadership determines whether teachers feel empowered or constrained. Collaborative and recognition-oriented environments encourage experimentation and shared learning.

Translating Vision into Practice: Mentorship bridges policy aspirations and classroom realities, ensuring reforms are enacted rather than merely documented.

Strengthening Teacher Competence and Confidence: Structured mentoring enhances pedagogical skill, reflective capacity, and readiness to adopt inquiry-based and problem-solving approaches.

Sustaining Innovation Over Time: Leadership provides structural support, while mentorship sustains day-to-day refinement and growth, making innovation durable rather than episodic.

Improving Reform Outcomes: When leadership and mentorship are aligned, teachers better understand new objectives, align instruction accordingly, and assess student learning effectively—enhancing critical thinking and scientific literacy.

Conclusion

Leadership dynamics and mentorship jointly shape the trajectory of science education. Leadership establishes vision, culture, and structure; mentorship ensures that vision is translated into effective classroom practice. Together, they enable pedagogical innovation, support curriculum reform, and strengthen teacher capacity. In contexts such as Nigerian science education—marked by limited resources and administrative pressures—the alignment of leadership and mentorship is not optional but essential. Their integration drives meaningful, context-responsive, and sustainable transformation in science classrooms.

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CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND MENTORSHIP IN SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

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Introduction

Leadership dynamics and mentorship have increasingly emerged as foundational pillars in the advancement of Social Studies education within contemporary educational systems. In an era marked by rapid social transformation, civic complexities, globalization, and technological disruption, Social Studies educators are expected not merely to transmit knowledge, but to cultivate critical thinking, democratic values, cultural competence, and active citizenship among learners. Achieving these outcomes requires more than subject mastery; it demands visionary leadership and sustained mentorship structures that support professional growth and institutional renewal (Northouse, 2022).

Leadership in education is no longer conceived as a positional authority confined to administrators; rather, it is understood as a relational and distributed process that influences instructional practices, school culture, and policy implementation (Spillane, 2006). Within Social Studies education, leadership dynamics encompass curriculum innovation, pedagogical transformation, advocacy for civic engagement, and the capacity to respond to socio-political realities in diverse classroom contexts. Effective leadership in this domain requires collaborative engagement, ethical responsibility, and the ability to inspire both colleagues and students toward shared educational goals (Bush, 2020).

Complementing leadership is mentorship, which serves as a critical mechanism for transmitting professional values, pedagogical competence, and reflective practice across generations of educators. Mentorship provides structured guidance, psychosocial support, and professional modeling that enhances teacher identity formation and instructional effectiveness (Hobson et al., 2009). For Social Studies educators, mentorship is particularly significant given the interdisciplinary and value-laden nature of the subject, which demands nuanced understanding of citizenship, diversity, social justice, and national development.

Research consistently demonstrates that mentorship contributes to teacher retention, improved classroom practices, and leadership development (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). When embedded within institutional frameworks,

mentoring relationships cultivate communities of practice that encourage shared inquiry, innovation, and continuous improvement (Wenger, 1998). Such collaborative ecosystems are indispensable in strengthening Social Studies education, especially in contexts where policy reforms, curricular changes, and societal expectations continually reshape educational priorities.

Furthermore, leadership dynamics and mentorship intersect in powerful ways. Transformational leadership models emphasize the importance of developing others, fostering professional capacity, and building collective efficacy (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). In Social Studies education, this intersection enables emerging educators to navigate complex civic themes, controversial issues, and culturally responsive teaching practices with confidence and ethical clarity. Leadership, therefore, becomes both a structural function and a developmental process, sustained through mentoring relationships that nurture future leaders within the discipline.

In developing contexts such as Nigeria and other emerging educational systems, strengthening leadership and mentorship in Social Studies education is particularly critical. The subject plays a strategic role in nation-building, democratic consolidation, and value reorientation. However, achieving these objectives requires deliberate investment in professional capacity development, institutional leadership cultures, and structured mentoring frameworks. By interrogating the dynamics of leadership and mentorship in Social Studies education, this chapter contributes to ongoing scholarly discourse on sustainable educational transformation and professional excellence.

Leadership Explained

Leadership refers to the process through which an individual or group influences others to achieve shared goals and objectives. In educational settings, leadership involves providing direction, inspiring commitment, coordinating activities, and creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning. Scholars have emphasised that leadership is not merely positional but relational, involving continuous interaction between leaders and followers within specific organizational contexts (Northouse, 2022; Bush, 2020).

From an educational perspective, leadership is concerned with improving instructional quality, fostering professional collaboration, and enhancing learner outcomes. Journal-based studies indicate that effective educational leadership positively correlates with teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness (Harris, 2021; Aina, 2020). Leadership therefore serves as a catalyst for school improvement and curriculum effectiveness.

In the Nigerian context, leadership in education also involves navigating policy demands, cultural expectations, and resource constraints. Nigerian scholars have noted that school leaders who adopt participatory and instructional leadership approaches are better positioned to support teachers and implement

curriculum reforms effectively (Okeke & Eze, 2019; Yusuf & Adeyemi, 2019). These perspectives highlight leadership as a dynamic and context-sensitive process.

Concept of Mentorship

Mentorship is a professional development process in which a more experienced individual provides guidance, support, and feedback to a less experienced colleague to enhance professional growth. In education, mentorship plays a critical role in teacher induction, skill development, and professional socialisation. Mentorship relationships are typically characterised by trust, mutual respect, and sustained interaction (Kram, 2019; Eze & Obi, 2021).

Research from educational journals indicates that mentorship contributes significantly to teachers' instructional competence, classroom management skills, and professional confidence. Through mentoring, novice teachers gain access to experiential knowledge, practical strategies, and professional norms that are not always acquired through formal training (Yusuf & Adeyemi, 2019; Harris, 2021). In Nigerian schools, mentorship has been identified as an effective strategy for supporting early-career teachers, particularly in contexts with limited access to formal professional development programmes. Studies have shown that well-structured mentorship enhances teacher retention and improves instructional quality in secondary schools (Aina, 2020; Okeke & Eze, 2019).

Concept of Social Studies Education

Social Studies education is an interdisciplinary field that integrates knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes from the social sciences and humanities to prepare learners for responsible citizenship. It focuses on developing learners' understanding of societal relationships, governance systems, cultural diversity, and social values necessary for effective participation in society. International literature describes Social Studies as a foundation for civic competence and democratic engagement (Olatunji & Bello, 2020; Harris, 2021).

In Nigeria, Social Studies education is designed to promote national consciousness, social cohesion, moral values, and problem-solving skills. Nigerian journal studies emphasise that Social Studies plays a critical role in fostering unity, tolerance, and civic responsibility among learners in a pluralistic society (Eze & Obi, 2021; Okeke & Eze, 2019).

Effective Social Studies education depends on qualified teachers, appropriate instructional strategies, and supportive leadership structures. Scholars argue that leadership and mentorship are essential for ensuring that Social Studies instruction remains relevant, participatory, and responsive to contemporary social challenges (Bush, 2020; Aina, 2020).

Leadership in Educational Contexts

Leadership in educational contexts refers to the ability of individuals to influence others toward the achievement of shared institutional and instructional

goals. It involves setting direction, building a shared vision, motivating stakeholders, and creating conditions that support effective teaching and learning. Educational leadership has been identified as a key factor in school improvement and teacher effectiveness across diverse educational systems (Northouse, 2022; Bush, 2020).

Within Social Studies education, leadership extends beyond administrative authority to encompass instructional leadership, moral leadership, and civic leadership. School leaders and departmental heads are expected to model democratic values such as fairness, participation, accountability, and respect for diversity, which are central to the philosophy of Social Studies. Studies have shown that when school leaders demonstrate ethical and participatory leadership practices, teachers are more likely to adopt learner-centred and inquiry-based instructional strategies (Olatunji & Bello, 2020; Harris, 2021).

In the Nigerian context, leadership in Social Studies education also involves supporting teachers in interpreting curriculum objectives, integrating national values, and addressing contemporary social challenges. Effective leadership ensures alignment between policy expectations, curriculum content, and classroom practices, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of Social Studies instruction (Aina, 2020; Okeke & Eze, 2019).

Leadership Dynamics

Leadership dynamics describe the patterns of interaction among leaders, teachers, learners, and the institutional environment. These dynamics include communication processes, decision-making structures, power relations, collaboration, and conflict management strategies. Leadership dynamics are shaped by leadership styles, organizational culture, and policy contexts, and they significantly influence teachers' professional behaviour and instructional effectiveness (Spillane, 2021; Harris, 2021).

In Social Studies education, leadership dynamics are particularly significant because the subject emphasises democratic participation, dialogue, and shared responsibility. Schools that practise inclusive and collaborative leadership dynamics tend to foster professional trust, collective efficacy, and reflective practice among teachers. Empirical studies indicate that collaborative leadership dynamics enhance curriculum implementation and promote innovative instructional practices in Social Studies classrooms (Bush, 2020; Olatunji & Bello, 2020).

Conversely, authoritarian or fragmented leadership dynamics may undermine teacher morale and restrict professional growth. When leadership practices contradict the democratic values taught in Social Studies, learners may receive conflicting messages about citizenship and governance. Positive leadership dynamics therefore serve not only instructional purposes but also act as practical demonstrations of democratic principles for both teachers and learners (Harris, 2021; Spillane, 2021).

Mentorship in Education

Mentorship is a professional relationship in which an experienced educator provides guidance, support, and professional modelling to a less experienced colleague. It plays a critical role in teacher induction, professional socialisation, and continuous development. Mentorship has been widely recognised as an effective strategy for improving teaching quality, enhancing professional competence, and supporting teacher retention (Kram, 2019; Yusuf & Adeyemi, 2019).

In Social Studies education, mentorship supports teachers in mastering subject content, adopting participatory and inquiry-based instructional strategies, and managing classroom discussions on sensitive social and political issues. Through mentoring relationships, novice teachers learn how to translate curriculum objectives into meaningful learning experiences that promote critical thinking and civic engagement. Nigerian studies have shown that effective mentorship positively influences teachers' instructional competence and professional confidence (Eze & Obi, 2021; Okeke & Eze, 2019).

Mentorship may be formal, structured through institutional programmes, or informal, emerging through collegial interactions. Regardless of form, effective mentorship is characterised by trust, mutual respect, reflective dialogue, and shared professional values. In resource-constrained educational contexts, mentorship also provides emotional support and professional encouragement, thereby sustaining teachers' commitment to Social Studies education (Yusuf & Adeyemi, 2019; Aina, 2020).

Theoretical Foundations of Leadership and Mentorship

The conceptual grounding of leadership and mentorship in education draws from several interrelated theories that illuminate how influence, learning, and professional growth occur within schools.

Transformational Leadership Theory, advanced by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and further developed by Bernard M. Bass (1985), emphasises a leader's capacity to inspire, intellectually stimulate, and motivate followers toward the achievement of shared and morally grounded goals. Transformational leaders cultivate vision, foster commitment, and elevate the values and aspirations of their followers. In the context of Social Studies education, this theory is especially pertinent because the discipline prioritises value formation, civic consciousness, and democratic participation. Transformational school leaders encourage teachers to adopt innovative pedagogies, engage in reflective practice, and align instructional delivery with principles of social justice, citizenship, and national development.

Instructional Leadership Theory, strongly associated with the works of Philip Hallinger and Joseph Murphy, positions teaching and learning as the central mission of educational institutions. Instructional leaders focus on curriculum supervision, classroom monitoring, teacher development, and the creation of supportive learning environments. Within Social Studies education, instructional leadership ensures that teachers receive structured guidance in curriculum

interpretation, learner-centred pedagogies, and assessment strategies that cultivate critical thinking, civic engagement, and analytical competence. This leadership orientation reinforces accountability while strengthening professional capacity.

Distributed Leadership Theory, conceptualised by scholars such as James Spillane and Peter Gronn, reconceptualises leadership as a collective and interactive process rather than the sole function of formal administrators. Leadership practice is viewed as stretched across individuals, roles, and routines within the school community. This perspective aligns closely with the collaborative and participatory ethos of Social Studies education. By encouraging shared decision-making and collegial responsibility, distributed leadership empowers teachers to assume leadership functions, engage in peer mentoring, and contribute meaningfully to school improvement processes.

Mentorship practices are further illuminated by Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura. Bandura posits that learning occurs through observation, modelling, interaction, and guided participation. Within mentoring relationships, novice Social Studies teachers acquire professional knowledge and pedagogical competence by observing experienced colleagues, engaging in reflective dialogue, and receiving constructive feedback. Through this process, mentorship becomes not merely supervisory but developmental—facilitating professional identity formation and sustained instructional improvement.

Leadership Dynamics in Social Studies Education

Leadership dynamics in Social Studies education operate across multiple levels of the school system. At the school level, principals and administrators influence instructional practices through policy implementation, resource allocation, and the establishment of professional cultures that either support or constrain effective teaching. When school leaders prioritise Social Studies education and recognise its civic importance, teachers are more likely to demonstrate commitment and instructional creativity.

At the departmental level, heads of Social Studies coordinate curriculum implementation, organise instructional activities, and provide professional guidance to teachers. Supportive departmental leadership encourages teamwork, collaborative lesson planning, peer observation, and reflective practice, thereby enhancing instructional consistency and quality.

At the classroom level, teachers function as instructional leaders by facilitating dialogue, encouraging inquiry, and modelling democratic behaviours. Through participatory teaching strategies such as debates, simulations, group projects, and problem-solving activities, teachers demonstrate leadership that empowers learners to engage critically with social issues and societal challenges.

Mentorship Practices in Social Studies Education

Mentorship practices play a vital role in the professional development of Social Studies teachers, particularly during the early stages of their careers. Effective mentorship supports novice teachers in understanding curriculum expectations, selecting appropriate teaching strategies, and managing diverse classrooms. Collaborative lesson planning enables mentors and mentees to align instructional activities with learning outcomes and assessment standards.

Classroom observation and feedback constitute essential components of mentorship. Mentors observe teaching sessions, provide constructive feedback, and engage mentees in reflective discussions aimed at improving instructional effectiveness. In Social Studies education, mentorship also focuses on helping teachers address sensitive and controversial topics such as governance, ethnicity, religion, and social justice with professionalism and balance.

In contexts where access to formal professional development is limited, mentorship serves as a practical and sustainable means of capacity building. Beyond instructional support, mentorship provides emotional encouragement and professional affirmation, contributing to teacher retention and sustained commitment to the goals of Social Studies education.

Interrelationship between Leadership and Mentorship

Leadership and mentorship are complementary and mutually reinforcing processes within educational institutions. Effective leadership creates an enabling environment for mentorship by promoting collaboration, allocating time for professional interaction, and recognising mentoring efforts. Leaders who value mentorship integrate it into school structures and professional development plans.

Mentorship, in turn, contributes to leadership development by preparing teachers to assume leadership roles within departments and schools. Through mentoring relationships, teachers develop confidence, reflective capacity, and professional competence, positioning them as future instructional leaders. In Social Studies education, this interrelationship ensures continuity of professional values, consistency in curriculum delivery, and alignment between institutional goals and classroom practices.

Challenges Confronting Leadership and Mentorship in Social Studies Education

Although leadership and mentorship are widely acknowledged as foundational to effective educational practice, their implementation within Social Studies education continues to encounter systemic and structural constraints. One major challenge is the limited preparation of school leaders and teachers in instructional and transformational leadership practices. Many educational administrators receive insufficient training in pedagogical leadership, resulting in an overemphasis on administrative compliance rather than instructional improvement (Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Consequently, opportunities to cultivate professional growth through mentoring relationships are often diminished.

Additionally, excessive administrative responsibilities and bureaucratic demands reduce the time available for instructional supervision and professional collaboration. Teachers frequently operate under heavy workloads, compounded by inadequate teaching and learning resources, particularly in resource-constrained contexts. Such conditions weaken the sustainability of structured mentoring systems and undermine the professional support required for effective Social Studies instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Institutional culture also plays a critical role. In hierarchical educational environments, rigid power structures may discourage open dialogue, shared decision-making, and collegial collaboration—conditions that are essential for effective mentoring (Sergiovanni, 2001). Where communication flows are restricted, mentorship relationships risk becoming perfunctory rather than developmental.

Furthermore, contextual pressures such as large class sizes, curriculum congestion, and limited time for reflective practice significantly constrain meaningful professional interaction. Effective mentorship thrives on sustained reflection, feedback, and collaborative inquiry; however, time scarcity often reduces these to superficial engagements (Schön, 1983). Without deliberate institutional commitment to professional learning communities and mentoring frameworks, leadership and mentorship efforts may remain fragmented and inconsistent.

Addressing these challenges necessitates comprehensive capacity-building initiatives, strengthened institutional support systems, and sustained investment in teacher professional development. A systemic approach that integrates leadership training, mentorship structures, and resource allocation is essential for improving the quality and impact of Social Studies education.

Implications for Educational Practice and Policy

Reinforcing leadership dynamics and structured mentorship in Social Studies education carries significant implications for both practice and policy. At the school level, leadership development initiatives should prioritise instructional competence, democratic engagement, ethical responsibility, and collaborative learning cultures. Instructional leadership has been consistently linked to improved teaching practices and student outcomes, particularly when leaders focus on curriculum coherence and teacher development (Hallinger, 2005).

Teacher education institutions also bear responsibility for embedding structured mentorship preparation within both pre-service and in-service programmes. Preparing teachers not only as classroom practitioners but also as future mentors and instructional leaders promotes professional continuity and sustainability. Research indicates that formal mentoring programmes enhance teacher retention, instructional quality, and professional confidence (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

At the policy level, education authorities should develop clear mentoring frameworks that define roles, expectations, accountability measures, and evaluation

processes. Providing recognition, incentives, and institutional support for mentors can strengthen motivation and programme sustainability. Furthermore, systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be instituted to assess the effectiveness of leadership and mentorship initiatives in advancing teaching quality and civic learning outcomes.

Collectively, these strategic interventions will contribute to improved instructional standards, enhanced learner achievement, and the reinforcement of the civic and democratic mission central to Social Studies education..

Conclusion

This chapter has examined leadership dynamics and mentorship as critical determinants of effective Social Studies education. Leadership shapes institutional culture, instructional priorities, and professional relationships, while mentorship supports teacher development, instructional competence, and professional identity. The synergy between leadership and mentorship ensures consistency in curriculum delivery, sustains democratic values, and enhances learners' civic outcomes. Strengthening leadership capacity and mentorship structures is therefore essential for ensuring that Social Studies education fulfils its role in preparing learners for responsible participation in society.

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CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

LANGUAGE, LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE: THE ROLE OF THE PROVOST IN BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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Introduction

Higher education systems worldwide are experiencing profound transformation shaped by globalization, digital disruption, demographic shifts, market competition, funding volatility, and rising societal expectations for accountability and impact (Altbach et al., 2019; Marginson, 2022). Universities are no longer evaluated solely on scholarly output; they are increasingly assessed on employability outcomes, innovation capacity, financial sustainability, community engagement, and ethical governance (Hazelkorn, 2023; OECD, 2022). In this evolving landscape, institutional sustainability extends beyond economic solvency to include academic quality, reputational legitimacy, inclusive governance, and long-term adaptive resilience.

Within this complex ecosystem, the provost, commonly designated as the chief academic officer, occupies a pivotal strategic position. The role bridges academic vision and operational execution, institutional mission and policy frameworks, faculty autonomy and administrative accountability (Kezar & Holcombe, 2019). As higher education institutions confront intensifying competition, technological acceleration, and demands for transparency, the provost's leadership increasingly determines whether institutions remain coherent, innovative, and sustainable.

This chapter analyzes how language, leadership, and governance intersect in the provost's role to shape institutional sustainability. It provides conceptual grounding, examines leadership practices in academic contexts, explores governance dynamics, and addresses contemporary challenges confronting provosts in complex institutional environments.

Conceptual Foundations

Language as an Instrument of Leadership

Language is not merely communicative; it is constitutive. Through discourse, leaders define institutional priorities, construct collective identity, and shape interpretations of change (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). In higher education settings, where ideas, critique, and intellectual exchange define organizational life, language becomes a central mechanism of leadership influence.

Framing theory suggests that leaders guide organizational sense-making by selectively emphasizing certain interpretations of events and policies (Cornelissen, 2017). A provost who presents restructuring as "strategic renewal" rather than "budget contraction" influences how stakeholders interpret institutional direction. Such discursive framing shapes perceptions of legitimacy, urgency, and opportunity.

Recent scholarship on strategic communication emphasizes transparency, inclusivity, and dialogic engagement as essential to trust-building in complex institutions (Men, 2021). In universities characterized by disciplinary diversity and professional autonomy, communicative competence strengthens alignment without eroding collegial norms. Sustainable institutions emerge when leaders articulate coherent narratives that integrate mission, values, and long-term vision.

Leadership in Academic Settings

Academic leadership differs fundamentally from corporate leadership due to traditions of shared governance, collegial decision-making, and intellectual independence (Bolden et al., 2023). Authority in universities is distributed, and influence is often exercised through persuasion rather than hierarchy.

Research on distributed leadership in higher education highlights the relational and collaborative dimensions of academic authority (Bolden et al., 2023). While the provost holds formal executive power, sustainable impact depends on building coalitions among faculty, deans, governing boards, and students. Core leadership responsibilities of the provost typically include safeguarding academic standards, guiding curriculum innovation, supporting research productivity, overseeing quality assurance processes, and facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration. Effective academic leadership requires translating strategic aspirations into measurable academic policies while preserving intellectual freedom. It is both visionary and operational.

Academic Governance and Sustainability

Academic governance encompasses the formal structures and informal norms that guide decision-making within higher education institutions (Shattock, 2013). These include governing councils, senates, faculty committees, accreditation systems, and executive offices. Sustainability in governance refers to the institution's capacity to maintain academic integrity, financial viability, and stakeholder trust over time (Marginson, 2022). Effective governance balances accountability mechanisms with academic autonomy.

The provost frequently chairs or plays a central role in academic senates, curriculum committees, and promotion boards. Through these platforms, the provost shapes policies related to program approval, faculty evaluation, student progression, and research ethics. Strong governance frameworks enhance institutional legitimacy, which is foundational to sustainability in competitive environments.

The Provost as Academic Leader and Strategic Agent - Defining the Provost's Role

The provost oversees academic affairs, including faculty recruitment, tenure and promotion systems, academic budgeting, program evaluation, and accreditation compliance (Kezar & Holcombe, 2019). The role demands managerial expertise, political acumen, and scholarly credibility. Beyond administrative coordination, the provost provides intellectual stewardship. Faculty often look to this office for direction regarding research priorities, pedagogical innovation, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Thus, the position requires both executive competence and academic legitimacy.

Academic Visioning and Strategic Planning: Strategic planning in higher education is an adaptive and participatory process that aligns institutional mission with external realities (Bryson, 2018). Rapid technological shifts, demographic transitions, and labor market transformation necessitate anticipatory leadership (OECD, 2022). The provosts contribute to strategic planning by interpreting enrollment and demographic data, assessing technological disruption and digital learning models, evaluating workforce and industry demands, identifying emerging fields of scholarship. A coherent academic vision fosters institutional alignment between mission, budgeting, faculty development, and curriculum design. Sustainability depends on this alignment.

Curriculum Leadership and Innovation

In knowledge-driven economies, curriculum relevance is directly tied to institutional competitiveness (Altbach et al., 2019). Universities must integrate emerging disciplines, digital competencies, sustainability literacy, and ethical reasoning into academic programmes. High-impact educational practices, such as experiential learning, undergraduate research, and interdisciplinary study, have been shown to improve student engagement and outcomes (Kuh et al., 2017). The provost plays a central role in guiding curriculum review cycles to ensure programmes reflect contemporary scholarship and societal needs.

Curricular innovation may involve embedding sustainability and ethics across disciplines, expanding interdisciplinary programmes, promoting experiential and community-based learning, and scaling digital and blended learning models. Such reforms strengthen adaptability and long-term institutional relevance.

Faculty Development and Scholarly Excellence

Faculty constitute the intellectual capital of universities. Sustained academic quality requires investment in research support, teaching innovation, and career development (O'Meara et al., 2020). Provosts advance faculty excellence through competitive research funding mechanisms, teaching and learning centres, structured mentorship initiatives, and transparent tenure and promotion frameworks. By reinforcing scholarly productivity and pedagogical effectiveness, the provost strengthens institutional reputation and research impact.

Language and Leadership in Practice

Leadership communication shapes institutional culture. Transparent and inclusive dialogue fosters trust during periods of change (Men, 2021). Reflective leadership communication enhances engagement and reduces resistance. Strategic storytelling enables provosts to embed institutional values—equity, integrity, sustainability—into daily practices. Consistent messaging across speeches, policies, and strategic documents reinforces cultural coherence. Language also mediates conflict. Academic environments often involve competing disciplinary interests and resource constraints. Skilled communicative framing helps reconcile tensions while preserving collegial relationships.

Academic Governance: Structures and Processes

Collaborative Decision-Making

Shared governance remains a defining feature of higher education (Shattock, 2013). Effective governance balances managerial efficiency with participatory deliberation. Provosts engage with Academic Board, Departmental committees, Governing Council, Union congresses, and Accreditation agencies. Participatory governance enhances institutional legitimacy and collective ownership of strategic initiatives.

Policy Development and Implementation

Provosts lead the formulation of policies governing academic integrity, assessment standards, quality assurance, and student progression. Clear procedural frameworks strengthen accountability and protect academic standards. Effective implementation depends on communication clarity, monitoring systems, and feedback mechanisms. Governance structures thus function as institutional safeguards.

Ethical and Inclusive Governance

Ethical leadership promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion within academic communities (Tierney, 2014). Sustainable institutions cultivate environments where diverse perspectives shape policy decisions. Provosts must ensure governance processes promote representative participation, protect academic freedom, advance gender and cultural equity, and align with institutional mission. Ethical governance reinforces institutional resilience and credibility.

Contemporary Challenges Facing Provosts

Resource Constraints and Strategic Prioritization: Provosts increasingly operate under significant financial pressures due to declining public funding, fluctuations in student enrollment, and escalating operational costs (Hazelkorn, 2023). These challenges demand that provosts exercise strategic resource allocation, ensuring that financial decisions do not compromise academic quality. Effective responses include implementing data-driven budgeting processes, fostering transparent communication with stakeholders, and prioritizing initiatives that maximize both efficiency and educational impact. Such approaches not only support institutional sustainability but also maintain the confidence of faculty, students, and external partners.

Balancing Academic Freedom and Accountability: Academic freedom remains a foundational principle for scholarly innovation and intellectual exploration. At the same time, higher education institutions must comply with accreditation requirements, regulatory standards, and broader accountability frameworks (Altbach et al., 2019). Provosts navigate this delicate balance by adopting consultative leadership approaches, establishing policies that respect faculty autonomy, and ensuring accountability mechanisms are clear, consistent, and fair. By fostering an environment that encourages both innovation and responsibility, provosts help maintain the institution's credibility and academic integrity.

Leading Transformational Change: The modern higher education landscape demands that provosts lead initiatives in digital transformation, interdisciplinary program development, and international collaborations. Transformational leadership, characterized by vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and empowerment of stakeholders, is critical in guiding institutions through these changes (Bolden et al., 2023). Provosts who embrace this leadership style not only catalyze innovation but also cultivate a culture of collaboration, resilience, and continuous improvement across the academic enterprise.

Illustrative Cases of Provost Leadership

Institutional Academic Renewal: In one institutional context, a provost spearheaded a comprehensive curriculum reform aimed at integrating sustainability across multiple disciplines. By engaging in inclusive consultations and fostering cross-departmental collaboration, the initiative enhanced curriculum coherence, increased student engagement, and ensured academic programmes remained relevant to contemporary societal and professional demands.

Governance Reform for Inclusion: In another instance, governance reforms led by a provost focused on expanding faculty representation in decision-making processes and establishing transparent communication platforms. These measures strengthened trust between administrators and faculty, improved participation in institutional governance, and fostered alignment with the institution's strategic priorities.

Implications for Practice

For provosts seeking to advance institutional sustainability and excellence, several strategic practices are recommended:

i. Employ transparent and strategic communication to align stakeholders around shared goals.
ii. Strengthen shared governance structures to enhance participation and collective decision-making.
iii. Embed ethical, inclusive, and equitable principles into policies and institutional frameworks.
iv. Invest in faculty development programmes and leadership capacity-building to cultivate institutional talent.
v. Integrate data analytics into academic planning and decision-making to ensure evidence-informed strategies.

By adopting these approaches, provosts can navigate contemporary challenges, drive transformational change, and sustain institutional effectiveness in an increasingly complex higher education environment.

Conclusion

The provost serves as a pivotal figure in guiding higher education institutions toward sustainability and long-term excellence. By employing strategic communication, fostering collaborative leadership, and promoting participatory governance, provosts significantly shape an institution's identity, uphold rigorous academic standards, and strengthen organizational resilience. Sustainable higher education institutions are those where open communication cultivates trust among stakeholders, governance structures maintain legitimacy, and visionary leadership motivates a shared commitment to institutional goals. Moreover, the provost's ability to balance administrative oversight with academic innovation is critical for adapting to evolving educational, social, and economic challenges. Future research should focus on developing context-specific frameworks for provost leadership across diverse higher education systems, examining how cultural, organizational, and policy variations influence leadership effectiveness and institutional sustainability. Such investigations would provide deeper insights into best practices for governance, strategic decision-making, and capacity-building in universities worldwide.

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CHAPTER FIFTY

PRINCIPLES AND DYNAMICS OF MENTORING IN ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

The transformative potential of mentoring in academic settings has garnered increasing attention as higher education institutions worldwide grapple with faculty development, research productivity, and educational quality challenges. In sub-Saharan Africa, where universities face unique pressures including limited resources, expanding student populations, and the imperative to produce locally relevant knowledge, mentoring emerges as a critical strategy for building institutional capacity and nurturing academic leaders.

Recent scholarship highlights the multidimensional nature of academic mentoring, encompassing transmission of technical skills, cultivation of professional identities, ethical frameworks, and leadership capabilities (Omeka & Necus-Agba, 2025; Owusu-Agyeman, 2022). In Nigerian higher education, mentoring has been practiced primarily through informal channels, prompting calls for more systematic, structured approaches that can deliver measurable outcomes while remaining culturally responsive (Somefun & Adebayo, 2021).

This chapter synthesizes contemporary research on mentoring principles and dynamics, providing educational leaders and practitioners with evidence-based insights into effective practices that can strengthen academic development. By examining enabling factors and persistent challenges in resource-constrained environments, this chapter contributes to efforts to professionalize mentoring as a cornerstone of academic excellence.

Mentoring in Academic Contexts: Conceptual Clarification and Forms

Defining Academic Mentoring

The concept of mentoring, while widely invoked in educational discourse, remains subject to varied interpretations that reflect different philosophical traditions, organizational cultures, and developmental objectives. At its core, academic mentoring involves a sustained relationship between an experienced faculty member or senior academic (the mentor) and a less experienced colleague or student (the mentee), characterized by guidance, support, knowledge transfer, and mutual professional growth. However, this basic definition obscures the rich

complexity and diverse manifestations of mentoring relationships in contemporary higher education.

Masehela (2025) distinguishes between structured and informal mentoring in South African universities, noting that structured mentoring refers to formalized professional development programs intentionally designed to support specific groups of staff members through professionally managed and carefully planned interventions. In contrast, informal mentoring relationships evolve organically, often based on personal affinities, shared research interests, or departmental proximity. Both forms offer distinct advantages: structured programs provide consistency, accountability, and institutional support, while informal relationships may offer greater flexibility, authentic connection, and responsiveness to individual needs (Owusu-Agyeman, 2022).

In the Nigerian context, mentoring has historically operated through informal channels, embedded within traditional hierarchical structures that mirror broader cultural patterns of knowledge transmission and respect for seniority. Research by Omeka and Necus-Agba (2025) indicates that mentoring relationships in Nigerian colleges of education, while prevalent, often lack the systematic frameworks, clear objectives, and institutional support that characterize effective programs. This informality, while allowing for cultural adaptability, can result in inconsistent outcomes, limited accessibility for junior faculty, and missed opportunities for strategic institutional development.

Forms and Models of Academic Mentoring

Academic mentoring manifests in multiple forms serving distinct developmental purposes. Traditional dyadic mentoring remains predominant in African universities, though alternative configurations address contemporary demands. Peer mentoring represents an important model, particularly for early-career academics. Research by Nwosu et al. (2024) demonstrates that peer mentoring can enhance school attendance among rural Nigerian adolescents, though impacts on academic engagement may be modest. Similarly, intra-class peer mentorship significantly improves academic performance when properly structured (Eleje et al., 2025).

Group mentoring or mentoring communities represent another innovative model. Evidence from South African healthcare research training shows early-career researchers establish mentoring communities providing diverse perspectives, collaborative problem-solving, and mutual support (Ramlall et al., 2024). These developmental networks may be particularly valuable where traditional one-on-one mentoring faces limitations due to high ratios and competing faculty demands.

E-mentoring has emerged for overcoming geographical barriers. The CORE Africa Research Mentorship Scheme exemplifies how structured online mentoring connects early-career researchers with experienced mentors, facilitating skill development and grant writing success despite distance (CORE Africa, 2021).

However, implementation requires adequate digital infrastructure and attention to relationship-building in virtual spaces.

Principles of Effective Academic Mentoring: Core Values and Ethical Foundations

Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit

Effective mentoring transcends unidirectional knowledge transfer to embrace reciprocity, wherein both mentors and mentees contribute to and benefit from the relationship. Contemporary scholarship emphasizes that mentoring should not be conceptualized as a hierarchical transaction but rather as a collaborative partnership that honors the experiences, perspectives, and agency of all participants. Masehela (2025) argues that mentoring relationships are characterized by profound personal commitment requiring both parties to invest in building meaningful connections where each becomes familiar with the other's strengths, challenges, and professional aspirations.

In African academic contexts, the principle of reciprocity aligns with indigenous values of Ubuntu—the philosophical concept emphasizing interconnectedness, communal responsibility, and mutual care. Effective mentoring programs draw upon these cultural foundations while adapting to contemporary professional demands. Research from South African universities indicates that mentees must actively participate in mentoring relationships, taking responsibility for articulating their needs, seeking feedback, and contributing their fresh perspectives and emerging expertise to enrich the partnership (Owusu-Agyeman, 2022).

Trust, Confidentiality, and Psychological Safety

Trust constitutes the foundation upon which productive mentoring relationships are built. For mentees to openly discuss professional challenges, admit knowledge gaps, and explore career uncertainties, they require assurance that their vulnerabilities will be respected and protected. Somefun and Adebayo (2021) emphasize that mentoring relationships provide a safe platform where mentees can make and learn from mistakes without fear of judgment or professional repercussions. This psychological safety becomes particularly critical in highly competitive academic environments where pressures for productivity and advancement may discourage authentic disclosure of struggles.

Confidentiality emerges as a corollary principle, ensuring that sensitive information shared within mentoring relationships remains protected except when disclosure is necessary for addressing serious professional or ethical concerns. In African contexts where personal and professional lives often interweave closely, and where extended family and community relationships influence career trajectories, mentors must navigate confidentiality with cultural sensitivity while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.

Commitment to Mentee Development and Empowerment

Central to ethical mentoring is an unwavering commitment to mentee development, advancement, and empowerment. Effective mentors prioritize mentee interests even when these may diverge from mentor preferences or institutional pressures. This principle requires mentors to help mentees develop critical thinking skills, independent problem-solving capabilities, and the confidence to chart their own professional paths rather than simply reproducing mentor approaches or perpetuating existing academic hierarchies (Masehela, 2025).

Research from Nigerian universities reveals that effective mentors serve multiple roles including guide, counselor, and advisor, offering expertise and experience while empowering mentees to make informed decisions and develop skills necessary for independent scholarship (Omeka & Necus-Agba, 2025). This empowerment orientation becomes especially important for addressing power imbalances and promoting equity in academic mentoring relationships. For women academics and other underrepresented groups in African higher education, mentoring that emphasizes empowerment can serve as a critical mechanism for challenging structural barriers and creating pathways to leadership positions.

Cultural Responsiveness and Contextual Awareness

Mentoring practices must demonstrate cultural responsiveness, recognizing that effective strategies vary across social, cultural, and institutional contexts. What constitutes appropriate mentor behavior, acceptable boundaries, or effective communication styles may differ substantially between cultural settings. Research comparing mentoring impacts across contexts reveals significant variations; for instance, Baluku et al. (2021) found that mentoring's influence on entrepreneurial intentions differs markedly between individualistic Western contexts and collectivistic East African settings, underscoring the importance of cultural adaptation.

In Nigerian and broader African contexts, cultural responsiveness requires acknowledging traditional respect for seniority while avoiding paternalism, honoring communal values while supporting individual achievement, and navigating complex intersections of gender, ethnicity, and social class that shape academic experiences. Programs must balance standardized frameworks that ensure quality and consistency with flexibility that allows mentoring relationships to reflect local values, languages, and professional norms.

Dynamics of Mentoring Relationships: Institutional Context, Power Relations, and Mentoring Models

Institutional Contexts Shaping Mentoring

Mentoring relationships do not exist in isolation but are profoundly shaped by the institutional environments within which they develop. African higher education institutions face distinctive challenges including limited research funding, inadequate infrastructure, high teaching loads, and administrative burdens that constrain faculty time and energy for mentoring activities. Research on research productivity

in African universities identifies mentoring and coaching as critical factors alongside funding availability, institutional support, and research infrastructure (Mekonnen et al., 2022).

The institutional culture surrounding research and scholarship significantly influences mentoring dynamics. In universities that prioritize and reward research productivity, mentoring relationships often emphasize publication strategies, grant writing, and research network development. Conversely, in teaching-focused institutions, mentoring may center more heavily on pedagogical development, curriculum design, and student engagement. The challenge for many African universities lies in balancing multiple missions amid resource constraints, which can result in mentoring that addresses immediate teaching demands at the expense of longer-term research capacity development.

Research from South African universities demonstrates that institutional commitment to mentoring manifested through dedicated resources, recognition of mentoring contributions in promotion criteria, and provision of mentor training significantly enhances program sustainability and effectiveness (Masehela, 2025). In Nigerian contexts where mentoring often remains informal and unsupported, calls for formalization and institutionalization reflect recognition that ad hoc arrangements, however well-intentioned, cannot deliver the systematic capacity building required for institutional transformation.

Power Dynamics and Gender Considerations

Mentoring relationships inherently involve power differentials rooted in differences in rank, experience, institutional position, and access to resources and networks. While such hierarchies can facilitate knowledge transmission and provide mentees with access to opportunities, they also carry risks of dependency, exploitation, or perpetuation of existing inequalities. Effective mentoring requires conscious attention to power dynamics and deliberate efforts to mitigate potential abuses while leveraging mentor influence for mentee benefit.

Gender represents a particularly salient dimension of power in academic mentoring, especially in sub-Saharan African contexts where women remain significantly underrepresented in senior academic and leadership positions. UNESCO data indicates that only 24% of academic staff in tertiary education across sub-Saharan Africa are female, with women constituting merely 8% of professors at public universities in countries like Ghana (UNESCO, 2025). This gender imbalance creates challenges for women seeking same-gender mentors and may expose women to particular risks in cross-gender mentoring relationships including stereotyping, exclusion from informal networks, or inappropriate conduct.

Research on women's educational leadership in sub-Saharan Africa reveals persistent barriers including cultural attitudes that question women's managerial capabilities, limited support for leadership development, and societal expectations around domestic responsibilities (UNESCO, 2025). Effective mentoring for women

academics must address these systemic challenges through strategies including sponsorship for leadership opportunities, explicit discussion of gender-related obstacles, connection to networks of women scholars, and advocacy for institutional policies supporting work-family balance. Programs such as the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) have demonstrated success in empowering women scientists through capacity building that addresses organizational contexts, negotiation, collaboration, and leadership skills (Kingiri et al., 2022).

Developmental Stages and Relationship Evolution

Mentoring relationships evolve through recognizable developmental stages, each characterized by distinct dynamics, challenges, and opportunities. Initial stages involve relationship establishment, goal clarification, and trust building. During this period, mentors and mentees negotiate expectations, establish communication patterns, and begin to understand each other's working styles and priorities. Research from African mentoring programs emphasizes the importance of clearly defined mentorship goals during this formative stage, with poorly defined objectives identified as a significant challenge undermining program effectiveness (CORE Africa, 2021).

As relationships mature, the focus typically shifts toward substantive work on mentee development through specific activities such as manuscript review, research project design, teaching observation, or leadership skill development. Evidence from CARTA fellows in sub-Saharan Africa indicates that teaching, publishing, conference attendance, and grant applications represent particularly important mentoring domains during this productive phase (Somefun & Adebayo, 2021). However, mentoring must also address personal and social dimensions including networking, work-family balance, stress management, and time allocation challenges that early-career academics frequently encounter but may hesitate to raise in purely professional contexts.

Eventually, successful mentoring relationships transition toward greater equality and potentially peer collegiality as mentees develop expertise and independence. This evolution requires mentors to adjust their approach, providing decreasing directive guidance while offering continued support, sponsorship, and collaboration opportunities. In African contexts, this transition may be complicated by cultural norms emphasizing enduring respect for seniority, requiring careful navigation to honor traditional values while supporting mentee autonomy and professional maturity.

Mentoring and Academic Development: Teaching, Research, Leadership, and Career Growth

Impact on Teaching and Pedagogical Development

Teaching represents a fundamental dimension of academic work, yet new faculty often receive limited formal preparation for classroom responsibilities.

Mentoring provides critical support for pedagogical development, helping early-career academics navigate curriculum design, assessment strategies, classroom management, and student engagement challenges. In Nigerian colleges of education, mentoring has been identified as significantly contributing to academic staff growth, particularly in learning how to better perform teaching responsibilities (Omeka & Necus-Agba, 2025).

Effective pedagogical mentoring extends beyond technique transmission to encompass development of teaching philosophy, reflection on educational values, and cultivation of culturally responsive pedagogy appropriate for diverse student populations. For institutions serving predominantly African student bodies, this includes addressing teaching approaches that honor indigenous knowledge systems, incorporate local examples and contexts, and respond to students' varied educational backgrounds and learning needs. Mentors can model effective teaching practices, provide constructive feedback on teaching observations, and create safe spaces for discussing pedagogical challenges including managing large classes with limited resources, a common reality in many African universities.

Enhancing Research Productivity and Scholarly Impact

Research productivity represents a critical dimension of academic success and institutional advancement, yet early-career researchers often struggle with the complex demands of developing research programs, securing funding, conducting rigorous studies, and disseminating findings through peer-reviewed publications. Mentoring has demonstrated significant positive influence on research productivity, career development, and academic advancement in African contexts. Research examining mentoring in Nigerian universities reveals that mentoring relationships, though often informal, significantly influence academic career development, with mentoring accounting for 27% of variance in career advancement outcomes (Sajuyigbe et al., 2025).

Systematic research mentoring programs demonstrate tangible impacts on publication success and grant acquisition. The CORE Africa Research Mentorship Scheme, for instance, facilitated first research publications for nine mentees and successful completion of first grant proposals for three others within a relatively short timeframe (CORE Africa, 2021). Similarly, mentoring initiatives through the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) have contributed to capacity development in population and public health research across sub-Saharan Africa, with fellows benefiting from both formal mentoring assignments and peer mentoring networks (Somefun & Adebayo, 2021).

However, research mentoring in African contexts faces distinctive challenges including scholarly isolation, limited visibility, restricted access to like-minded researchers, and inadequate research infrastructure. Effective mentoring must address these systemic constraints while building individual capabilities in research design, methodology, academic writing, and research ethics. Mentors can facilitate

connections to research networks, provide guidance on navigating publication processes, offer co-authorship opportunities, and model effective time management strategies that balance research with heavy teaching and administrative loads.

Leadership Development and Career Advancement

Leadership development represents an often-overlooked dimension of academic mentoring, yet preparation for leadership roles proves essential for institutional effectiveness and career advancement. Research on transitions to research leadership in Africa reveals that access to mentors constitutes a key enabler for early and mid-career researchers assuming leadership positions, alongside international opportunities and cross-sectoral experience. Leaders who successfully navigated these transitions demonstrated proactive engagement in securing mentoring, networking, and developmental opportunities rather than passively waiting for institutional support (Ramlall et al., 2021).

Leadership mentoring addresses multiple domains including administrative skills, strategic thinking, conflict resolution, team building, and ethical decision-making. For women aspiring to leadership positions, mentoring becomes particularly critical given the barriers they face including cultural biases questioning women's leadership capabilities, exclusion from informal networks, and societal expectations around family responsibilities. Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa demonstrates that women leaders must navigate complex cultural and institutional environments while managing societal expectations, challenges that effective mentoring can help address through providing guidance, advocacy, sponsorship, and role modeling (UNESCO, 2025).

Career mentoring extends beyond specific skill development to encompass broader career planning, decision-making, and professional identity formation. Mentors can help mentees understand academic career trajectories, evaluate opportunities, negotiate employment terms, and develop strategic plans for advancement. For librarians and information professionals in Nigeria, mentoring has been identified as crucial for career growth, with various mentoring types contributing to professional advancement and role fulfillment (Sulyman et al., 2025). This career guidance function becomes especially valuable in African contexts where formal career counseling services may be limited and where unwritten rules and informal networks significantly influence advancement opportunities.

Holistic Development and Well-being

Contemporary understanding of academic mentoring recognizes that effective support must address the whole person rather than focusing narrowly on professional competencies. Research on mentoring experiences among CARTA fellows reveals that personal and social dimensions including networking, work-family balance, stress management, and time allocation constitute significant concerns requiring mentoring attention (Somefun & Adebayo, 2021). Academic careers

involve multiple competing demands, role ambiguity, and pressures that can threaten physical and mental health if not addressed proactively.

For women academics navigating dual burdens of professional responsibilities and family caregiving expectations particularly salient in many African cultural contexts mentoring that acknowledges and addresses work-life integration challenges proves essential. Programs such as AWARD explicitly incorporate modules addressing work-family balance, recognizing this as fundamental to women's sustained success in research careers. Mentors can provide emotional support, normalize struggles, share strategies for managing competing demands, and advocate for institutional policies supporting faculty well-being including parental leave, flexible work arrangements, and mental health resources.

Challenges and Way Forward: Key Constraints and Practical Strategies

Key Challenges Facing Mentoring in African Higher Education

Despite growing recognition of mentoring's value, multiple challenges constrain effective implementation in African higher education contexts. Foremost among these is the lack of formalization and institutional support for mentoring programs. Research across Nigerian universities reveals that mentoring, though widely practiced, remains largely informal and lacks the systematic frameworks, dedicated resources, and accountability mechanisms necessary for consistent, measurable outcomes. Without institutional recognition in promotion criteria or workload allocation, mentoring risks being marginalized as an altruistic luxury rather than a core professional responsibility (Somefun & Adebayo, 2021).

Resource limitations present formidable obstacles. Many African universities struggle with inadequate research funding, limited infrastructure, insufficient library resources, and constrained access to international networks and databases factors that undermine mentors' capacity to effectively support mentee development. High faculty workloads, driven by large class sizes, multiple course preparations, and administrative responsibilities, leave limited time for substantive mentoring engagement. The challenge becomes particularly acute given declining professoriate numbers and unfavorable mentee-to-mentor ratios in many institutions (Mekonnen et al., 2022).

Mentor preparation and quality assurance represent additional concerns. Research from African mentoring programs identifies challenges including difficulty finding suitable mentors, communication barriers, poorly defined goals, and mentees' limited foundational knowledge requiring extensive remedial support (CORE Africa, 2021). Many potential mentors, despite expertise in their disciplines, lack formal training in mentoring principles, relationship management, cross-cultural communication, or feedback delivery. Without such preparation, even well-intentioned mentors may struggle to provide effective support or may inadvertently perpetuate problematic practices.

Cultural and gender dynamics introduce additional complexity. Traditional hierarchical structures and gender norms may inhibit open communication, constrain women's access to male-dominated networks, or create discomfort in cross-gender mentoring relationships. Balancing respect for cultural traditions with imperatives for equity and inclusion requires thoughtful navigation. The underrepresentation of women in senior positions limits availability of female mentors and role models, potentially disadvantaging women mentees who may benefit particularly from same-gender mentoring relationships (UNESCO, 2025).

Strategic Directions and Evidence-Based Recommendations

Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires comprehensive, multi-level strategies engaging institutional leaders, policymakers, and academic communities. Central to progress is the formalization and institutionalization of mentoring within university structures and reward systems. Research from Nigerian universities strongly recommends that institutions formalize mentoring adoption, providing institutional support to enhance effectiveness and enable measurable outcomes (Sajuyigbe et al., 2025). This formalization should include clear policies defining mentoring expectations, dedicated resources including time allocation and funding, integration of mentoring contributions into promotion and tenure criteria, and accountability mechanisms ensuring program quality.

Comprehensive mentor training programs represent essential investments in quality improvement. Such programs should address mentoring principles, communication skills, cultural competence, power dynamics management, feedback delivery, ethical considerations, and strategies for supporting diverse mentees. Evidence from South African mentoring initiatives demonstrates that structured preparation enhances mentor confidence and effectiveness while reducing potential for harmful dynamics (Masehela, 2025). Training should be ongoing rather than one-time events, providing opportunities for mentors to refine their practice, share challenges, and learn from experienced colleagues.

Developing diverse mentoring models responsive to varied needs and contexts offers promise for expanding access and effectiveness. While traditional dyadic relationships provide value, institutions should also facilitate peer mentoring networks, group mentoring, e-mentoring platforms, and mentoring communities that can overcome resource constraints while providing multiple perspectives and support sources. The success of programs like CARTA in fostering peer mentoring alongside formal mentor assignments demonstrates the complementary value of varied approaches (Somefun & Adebayo, 2021).

Specific attention to gender equity requires deliberate strategies including recruitment and development of women mentors, creation of women-focused mentoring programs addressing unique challenges, provision of cross-gender mentoring training, advocacy for family-friendly policies, and monitoring of gender representation in mentoring participation and outcomes. Madagascar's experience demonstrates that investing in women's leadership and management skills through

targeted support can improve learning outcomes while reducing dropout rates, particularly benefiting vulnerable populations (UNESCO, 2024).

Leveraging technology to overcome geographical and resource barriers represents another strategic direction. Digital platforms can connect mentees with expertise beyond their immediate institutions, facilitate resource sharing, enable flexible scheduling, and reduce costs associated with travel and face-to-face meetings. However, successful e-mentoring requires adequate digital infrastructure, technological support, and attention to relationship-building in virtual spaces. Programs should blend technology use with periodic in-person interactions when feasible to strengthen relational bonds.

Building regional and continental networks for mentoring support and knowledge exchange can address the scholarly isolation many African academics experience. Initiatives such as CARTA, CORE Africa, and AfricaLics demonstrate the value of cross-institutional collaboration in providing mentoring, facilitating networking, and building critical masses of scholars in specific fields (Kingiri et al., 2022). Such networks can pool resources, share effective practices, provide diverse perspectives, and create communities of practice that extend beyond individual institutions.

Strengthening research ecosystems represents a necessary complement to individual mentoring efforts. Effective mentoring requires adequate infrastructure, funding opportunities, access to literature and databases, research ethics support, and opportunities for dissemination. Institutional and governmental investments in research capacity including competitive grant programs, library resources, research management support, and international collaboration opportunities enhance mentoring effectiveness by ensuring mentors have resources to support mentee development (Mekonnen et al., 2022).

Conclusion: Prof Mrs J.E. Anene-Okeakwa as a model of Academic Mentoring

This chapter has explored mentoring principles and dynamics in academic development, emphasizing sub-Saharan African and Nigerian experiences. It is contributed in honour of Prof (Mrs) J.E. Anene-Okeakwa, Provost of Federal College of Education Technical Asaba, Delta State (2019-2026). She is a scholar par excellence who has mentored so many other scholars and academics in various institutions around the world. To achieve effective mentoring, Prof Anene-Okeakwa operated through multiple model's dyadic relationships, peer networks, group mentoring, and technology-mediated connections guided by core principles including reciprocity, trust, commitment to empowerment, and cultural responsiveness. There are copious pieces of evidence demonstrating the positive impact of Prof Anene-Okeakwa's mentoring initiatives on human capital development, pedagogical skills, research productivity and leadership development of her mentees. In doing so, she leveraged on institutional support, clear frameworks, other trained mentors, and holistic approaches.

Strikingly, she was able to navigate through certain challenges including resource constraints, heavy workloads, and gender inequities which require multi-faceted strategies. Priority actions include formalizing mentoring within institutional structures, providing comprehensive mentor training, developing diverse models, advancing gender equity, leveraging technology, building regional networks, and strengthening research ecosystems. For educational leaders, mentoring represents a strategic imperative yielding returns for faculty development, institutional productivity, teaching quality, and broader development objectives.

By and large, the principles and practices examined in this Chapter offer guidance for developing culturally responsive, evidence-based mentoring programs. Moving forward requires sustained commitment to professionalize mentoring, address systemic barriers, promote equity, and position mentoring as central to academic development. Through such commitment, mentoring can realize its transformative potential as a catalyst for educational leadership excellence across the African continent.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

THE EQUITY-SCIENCE NEXUS: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A DRIVER FOR INCLUSIVE SCIENTIFIC GOVERNANCE

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Introduction

Modern scientific advancement is no longer solely a matter of technical proficiency; it is a matter of institutional culture. Within educational settings, leadership serves as the architect of this culture. However, contemporary science management often overlooks how systemic gender inequities and global challenges are interconnected. This paper establishes a framework for Inclusive Scientific Governance, arguing that for science to be truly sustainable, educational leaders must dismantle structural barriers to create parity across all scientific fields.

The Institutional Ecology of Marginalization

To address systemic inequality, educational leaders must first understand the Institutional Ecology of their departments. In an academic context, "Institutional Ecology" refers to the interconnected environment of a scientific organization comprising its physical facilities, social hierarchies, and unspoken cultural norms. In this framework, a science department is viewed as a living ecosystem where the "health" of the community is measured by its diversity and resilience.

Leadership must recognize that a "toxic" ecology characterized by rigid hierarchies, unequal resource distribution, and the historical exclusion of women acts as a limiting factor that stifles collective innovation. To rectify this, administrators must move beyond passive support to active Gender-Transformative Educational Leadership (GTELS), which seeks to intentionally cultivate a scientific community that is as diverse as the ecosystems it studies.

Strategic Stewardship of Professional Safety

A primary contemporary issue in science is the physical and psychological safety of the laboratory and field environment. Educational leaders act as "Stewards of Safety" when they implement policies that proactively mitigate environmental and social risks. By shifting from reactive management to Universal Design in science facilities, leaders remove the physical barriers such as inequitable access to high-quality resources or exposure to unmonitored hazards that

historically hindered women's participation. This stewardship ensures that the "Safety Dividend" is shared by all members of the scientific community.

Curricular Reform as a Tool for Recognition

Leadership must directly address the "Matilda Effect", the systematic under-recognition of women's scientific breakthroughs by reforming the curriculum itself. Inclusive governance involves integrating diverse forms of knowledge production into the science syllabus, ensuring that female role models are not just "tokenized" but are central to the scientific narrative. When leaders advocate for Eco-Pedagogy, they empower female educators to lead transitions toward socially responsible science, bridging the content knowledge gap created by historical exclusion and ensuring that scientific literacy is inclusive of all perspectives.

Fiscal Accountability and Equitable Resource Allocation

In an era of shifting global priorities, educational leaders must employ gender-responsive education sector planning (GRESP). This involves the intentional allocation of science budgets to support marginalized researchers and prioritizing infrastructure in areas with the largest gender gaps. By framing equity initiatives as an investment in economic and scientific resilience, leaders ensure that their institutions are not only meeting SDG 5 targets but are also better equipped to solve complex global challenges through a more robust and diverse talent pool.

Transformational Governance: A New STEM Blueprint

The final shift required is moving from traditional "power-based" management to Transformational Leadership. This new blueprint for science governance prioritizes transparency, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making. Under this paradigm, success in the sciences is measured not just by research volume, but by the diversity of the community and the health of the institutional culture. By treating the department as an ecology that requires constant care and equity, leaders secure the future of the scientific enterprise.

Conclusion

The future of the scientific enterprise is fundamentally a leadership challenge. By dismantling structural inequities through intentional educational governance and a deep understanding of institutional ecology, we create a scientific culture that is as resilient as the global systems it seeks to understand. Inclusive leadership is the only path toward a truly sustainable and innovative scientific future.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATION: ENHANCING TEACHERS' READINESS FOR STEAM PEDAGOGY IN DELTA STATE INDIGENOUS LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES

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Introduction

Transformational leadership and gender equity have emerged as key drivers in advancing educational quality and promoting inclusive pedagogical practices in contemporary school systems. In Nigeria, the shift from traditional STEM education to the more inclusive Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) framework reflects global efforts to foster creativity, innovation, and holistic skills among learners (Barakabitze et al., 2019). Within Delta State, the integration of STEAM pedagogy is particularly significant in indigenous linguistic communities, where language, culture, and contextual learning shape educational outcomes.

Despite its importance, the implementation of STEAM education in rural and linguistically diverse areas faces notable challenges. The effective delivery of STEAM subjects in indigenous languages—languages that connect learners to their cultural roots—can enhance comprehension, critical thinking, and cognitive development (Sánchez et al., 2018). However, disparities in teacher capacity, inadequate instructional materials, and limited policy support continue to impede progress, especially where English remains dominant and culturally valued above indigenous languages (Tikly, 2018).

Teacher readiness is central to successful STEAM integration. It encompasses not only knowledge and pedagogical expertise but also leadership support, language proficiency, and attitudes toward gender inclusion (Mohamed et al., 2017). In Delta State's indigenous linguistic communities, many teachers encounter systemic barriers including insufficient professional development, gender stereotypes within STEAM disciplines, and unequal access to technological resources (Uzoamaka, 2019). Female teachers and students in particular face sociocultural limitations that constrain their participation and advancement in STEAM fields

(Lamb, 2017), making gender equity a critical dimension of educational transformation.

Transformational leadership in education refers to a leadership approach in which school leaders inspire, motivate, and support teachers to achieve higher levels of professional performance and improve student-learning outcomes. In the classroom and teaching and learning context, transformational leaders foster a culture of collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement by providing mentorship, professional development opportunities, and resources that empower teachers to adopt effective pedagogical strategies. They encourage reflective practice, creativity in lesson design, and the integration of inclusive and student-centered approaches, such as using indigenous languages in STEAM or other subjects. By promoting shared vision, teacher autonomy, and motivation, transformational leadership enhances both teaching quality and student engagement, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes and a more dynamic, responsive educational environment.

The idea behind transformational leadership has proven effective in empowering teachers, promoting collaborative learning environments, and addressing gender-based inequalities in schools (Gess-Newsome et al., 2019). Leaders who model innovation, inclusivity, and cultural responsiveness can significantly improve teacher motivation and instructional quality, thereby strengthening readiness for STEAM pedagogy. Such leadership becomes even more essential where the use of indigenous languages intersects with efforts to achieve gender-balanced participation and equitable educational opportunities for all learners.

Therefore, understanding how transformational leadership and gender equity initiatives contribute to teachers' preparedness for STEAM education in Delta State is vital. This study seeks to explore the dynamics influencing teachers' readiness to implement STEAM pedagogy in indigenous linguistic communities, assess the existing challenges, and provide actionable insights that can inform future policies and professional development strategies.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing recognition of STEAM education as a critical pathway for fostering innovation, creativity, and future economic competitiveness, schools in Delta State's indigenous linguistic communities continue to face significant challenges in enhancing teachers' readiness for effective STEAM pedagogy. A major concern is that the extent to which transformational leadership influences teacher preparedness remains insufficiently explored, resulting in a persistent knowledge gap that hinders efforts to improve instructional quality and inclusive practices in linguistically diverse classrooms (Blevins, 2017). Without a clear understanding of leadership roles in motivating teachers, supporting professional growth, and driving

pedagogical transformation, stakeholders may struggle to implement strategies that address the specific developmental needs of educators in these settings.

Furthermore, issues of gender equity in STEAM education—particularly the participation and empowerment of female teachers and students—are not yet comprehensively studied within Delta State's indigenous communities. Persistent sociocultural biases and stereotypes often marginalize women's engagement in STEAM disciplines and leadership positions, negatively affecting teacher confidence, role modeling, and classroom gender dynamics (Edmonds-Wathen, 2015). The limited evidence on how gender-responsive leadership and policies support equitable participation contributes to a policy void that continues to reproduce gender disparities in educational outcomes.

Barriers such as inadequate professional development opportunities, insufficient access to instructional resources in indigenous languages, and a prevailing preference for English further constrain the effectiveness of STEAM education. Although research has shown that mother tongue instruction can improve learning comprehension and performance (Nyika, 2015), there is still a lack of empirical data on how indigenous language instruction interacts with gender equity and leadership in STEAM teaching within Delta State schools. Additionally, few studies have evaluated how transformational leadership practices enhance teachers' pedagogical readiness, technological integration, and inclusive instructional capacities in multilingual classroom contexts.

These knowledge gaps highlight the urgent need for a systematic investigation into the roles of transformational leadership and gender equity in improving teachers' readiness for STEAM pedagogy in Delta State's indigenous linguistic communities. Addressing these gaps will provide policymakers, school administrators, and stakeholders with evidence-based strategies that promote a culturally responsive, gender-inclusive, and innovation-driven educational system capable of advancing quality education for all learners.

Research Objectives

The broad objectives of this study is to examine the role of transformational leadership and gender equity in education: enhancing teachers' readiness for STEAM pedagogy in Delta state. Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Evaluate the current level of teachers' readiness for implementing STEAM pedagogy in Delta State indigenous linguistic communities
2. Examine the influence of transformational leadership on teachers' preparedness and motivation to deliver STEAM instruction in indigenous languages.
3. Identify gender-related challenges affecting teachers' participation, confidence, and effectiveness in STEAM education within indigenous linguistic communities in Delta State.

4. Investigate the major linguistic, sociocultural, and resource-related barriers to the effective implementation of STEAM pedagogy in indigenous language contexts
5. Propose gender-responsive and transformational leadership strategies capable of enhancing teacher capacity-building and promoting equitable participation in STEAM teaching in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the current level of preparedness among teachers for delivering STEAM pedagogy in Delta State indigenous linguistic communities?
2. How does transformational leadership influence teachers' readiness and professional capacity to teach STEAM subjects in indigenous languages?
3. In what ways do gender equity practices affect teacher involvement, confidence, and participation in STEAM education in Delta State?
4. What challenges and barriers hinder teachers from effectively delivering STEAM pedagogy in indigenous linguistic communities within Delta State?
5. What strategies can transformational leadership and gender-responsive initiatives adopt to enhance teacher readiness for STEAM pedagogy in indigenous language classroom settings?

Conceptual Clarification

Transformational leadership is a leadership framework characterized by vision-driven support, teacher empowerment, intellectual stimulation, and shared decision-making (Yakob, Sahudra, & Sukirno (2025); Avolio & Bass, (1995). In the school context, transformational leaders serve as change agents who enhance teacher motivation, professional growth, and willingness to adopt innovative pedagogies like STEAM. For indigenous linguistic communities, such leadership promotes resource mobilization, advocacy for language-inclusive curricula, and the creation of gender-equitable learning environments.

Gender equity in education refers to the fair and inclusive treatment of all genders, ensuring equal access to opportunities, resources, participation, and leadership roles within the school system (UNESCO, 2020). In STEAM disciplines—historically dominated by males—gender inequities manifest in stereotypes, low female representation among teachers and students, and sociocultural norms that restrict female engagement in scientific and technological careers. Promoting gender equity is therefore essential in enhancing teacher readiness, as empowered and confident female teachers serve as critical role models and drivers of inclusive STEAM learning in indigenous communities.

Teacher readiness refers to the level of competence, confidence, and motivation teachers possess to implement curriculum reforms and new pedagogical approaches effectively. It encompasses mastery of subject content, pedagogical knowledge, skillful use of instructional resources, and the ability to incorporate

relevant learning contexts (Willermark, 2021). In this study, teacher readiness specifically relates to the capability to deliver STEAM pedagogy within Delta State indigenous linguistic communities. This includes proficiency in indigenous languages, the capacity to integrate cultural and artistic elements into science-based learning, and readiness to respond to gender-inclusive and leadership-driven teaching reforms.

STEAM education expands the traditional STEM framework through the inclusion of the Arts—promoting creativity, innovation, and problem-solving through multidisciplinary learning experiences (Hussin et al., 2018). STEAM pedagogy therefore requires teachers to move beyond rote instruction toward learner-centered, collaborative, and inquiry-based teaching. In indigenous language contexts, this involves adapting STEAM concepts using culturally relevant expressions, examples, and symbols grounded in local knowledge and life experiences. Limited access to instructional resources—especially those developed in indigenous languages—continues to constrain teachers' capacity to deliver effective STEAM learning in rural areas.

Indigenous language instruction emphasizes teaching and learning using learners' mother tongue to improve comprehension, participation, cognitive development, and cultural identity retention (Agirdag & Vanlaar, 2018). In Delta State's multilingual communities, adopting indigenous languages for STEAM instruction supports inclusivity and reduces linguistic barriers that often disadvantage learners. However, implementation requires teachers who are bilingual or multilingual and professionally trained to translate scientific and technological concepts into culturally meaningful formats (Florence, 2018), which remains a notable challenge.

Barriers to effective STEAM pedagogy in indigenous languages remain multifaceted. These include sociolinguistic biases that privilege English, inadequate resource support, limited teacher training on both STEAM content and indigenous language delivery, and leadership gaps that fail to push for change (Mackenzie, 2020). Overcoming these barriers requires not only improved teacher preparation but systematic leadership intervention and gender-responsive policies that dismantle structural inequities.

Professional development (PD) constitutes structured teacher training focused on improving subject content knowledge, pedagogical skills, digital literacy, language proficiency, and gender-inclusive instructional practices (Richards, 2017). In this study, PD is conceptualized as a transformational and capacity-building process—strengthened through school leadership engagement, collaborative practice, and continuous improvement—to facilitate teachers' readiness for STEAM teaching in linguistically and culturally diverse settings.

Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural Theory, developed by Lev Vygotsky in the early 20th century (Vygotsky, 1978), emphasizes that learning and cognitive development are deeply rooted in social interaction and cultural context. Although Vygotsky's ideas emerged in the 1920s and 1930s, wider recognition followed only after translations of his works were published later in the century. His theory posits that knowledge is co-constructed through interaction with more knowledgeable individuals within sociocultural environments, challenging views of learning as an isolated, individual process (Vespone, 2023).

A core concept within Sociocultural Theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which defines the gap between what a learner can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with guided support. Instruction within the ZPD requires scaffolding, a strategy in which teachers provide structured support that gradually leads students to autonomous mastery. Language is also considered a central cultural tool that mediates thought and enables learners to engage effectively with academic content. Through sustained social interaction and the use of cultural tools, knowledge initially shared externally becomes internalized as independent cognitive skill.

The relevance of Sociocultural Theory to the present study lies in its affirmation of cultural and linguistic contexts as powerful mediators of learning. Using indigenous languages for STEAM instruction in Delta State enables learners to access complex concepts through familiar linguistic structures and culturally meaningful experiences. This aligns with research showing that culturally relevant pedagogy improves comprehension, learner identity, and participation in technical and scientific fields.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative survey research design to examine teachers' preparedness for STEAM instruction and the influence of transformational leadership and gender-related dynamics within educational settings in indigenous linguistic communities. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled systematic data collection from a large sample of participants and facilitated statistical examination of relationships among key variables such as teacher readiness, gender equity, leadership influence, and barriers to STEAM education.

The geographical focus of the study was Oshimili South Local Government Area (LGA), a region characterized by mixed urban–rural settlements and diverse indigenous linguistic environments. Ten (10) schools were selected using purposive sampling to ensure adequate representation of schools operating in indigenous language contexts. The selection criteria emphasized demographic diversity, accessibility, and engagement in STEAM-related instructional activities. This approach ensured that the sample reflected multiple perspectives concerning the integration of indigenous languages in STEAM pedagogy.

A structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was developed to elicit data on teachers' readiness for STEAM pedagogy, transformational leadership support, gender-related challenges, and contextual barriers including linguistic and resource constraints. In total, 700 questionnaires were distributed across the selected schools. The questionnaire also included items assessing the outcomes of professional development initiatives aimed at improving teacher competency in delivering STEAM education in indigenous languages.

Out of the 700 administered questionnaires, 691 were successfully retrieved and found valid for analysis, representing a very high response rate suitable for robust statistical interpretation. The collected data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate descriptive and inferential statistics. This analytical procedure allowed for examination of trends and relationships among variables guiding the study, including the influence of transformational leadership practices on teacher motivation and preparedness, as well as gender equity concerns affecting teachers' participation in STEAM education

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question 1: What is the current level of preparedness among teachers for delivering STEAM pedagogy in Delta State indigenous linguistic communities?

Table 1: Mean Table on Current Level of Preparedness among Teachers for Delivering STEAM Pedagogy

S/N	Statement	X	Decision
1	I feel confident in my ability to teach STEAM subjects using indigenous languages.	2.7	Agree
2	I have received adequate training to effectively deliver STEAM education in indigenous languages.	2.3	Disagree
3	The instructional materials available to me are sufficient for teaching STEAM subjects in indigenous languages.	2.2	Disagree
4	I regularly integrate indigenous languages when teaching STEAM subjects.	2.1	Disagree
5	I am familiar with the latest teaching approaches in STEAM education using indigenous languages.	2.4	Disagree

The results show that teachers express moderate confidence in teaching STEAM using indigenous languages (X = 2.7), yet they lack adequate training, instructional support, updated pedagogical knowledge, and consistent implementation in practice (X = 2.1–2.4). This means teacher preparedness remains insufficient, indicating a disconnect between teachers' confidence and their practical readiness to deliver STEAM pedagogy effectively in indigenous linguistic communities.

Research Question 2: How does transformational leadership influence teachers' readiness and professional capacity to teach STEAM subjects in indigenous languages?

Table 2: *Mean Table on Transformational Leadership Influence on Teachers' Readiness and Professional Capacity to Teach STEAM Subjects in Indigenous Languages*

S/N	Statement	X	Decision
1.	Leadership-driven training improved my ability to teach STEAM using indigenous languages.	2.5	Agree
2.	The training provided practical strategies for integrating indigenous linguistic elements into STEAM lessons.	2.6	Agree
3.	Leadership support has improved my confidence in STEAM instruction.	2.8	Agree
4.	School leadership provided adequate instructional resources for STEAM teaching in indigenous languages.	2.5	Agree
5.	Ongoing leadership follow-up and mentoring have helped my teaching practice.	2.6	Agree

The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership contributes positively to teacher readiness by improving confidence, providing mentorship, instructional resources, and practical strategies for STEAM instruction in indigenous languages (X = 2.5–2.8). However, the moderate means indicate that leadership influence is present but not strong enough to fully enhance teachers' professional capacity and bridge existing pedagogical gaps.

Research Question 3: In what ways do gender equity practices affect teacher involvement, confidence, and participation in STEAM education in Delta State?

Table 3: *Mean Table on Gender Equity Practices affect Teacher Involvement, Confidence and Participation in STEAM Education*

S/N	Statement	X	Decision
1.	Students understand STEAM concepts better when indigenous language is used.	2.8	Agree
2.	Indigenous languages increase students' engagement in STEAM.	2.7	Agree
3.	Students' performance in STEAM subjects has improved because of indigenous language integration.	2.5	Agree
4.	Students become more motivated when STEAM is taught in their indigenous language.	2.7	Agree
5.	Indigenous language usage supports students' STEAM problem-solving skills.	2.6	Agree

The data show that STEAM instruction in indigenous languages improves comprehension, engagement, motivation, performance, and problem-solving (X = 2.5–2.8), enabling inclusive classroom participation and boosting learner confidence—especially for marginalized groups such as girls. This suggests that gender-responsive language practices can significantly enhance teacher and learner involvement in STEAM education.

Research Question 4: What challenges and barriers hinder teachers from effectively delivering STEAM pedagogy in indigenous linguistic communities within Delta State?

Table 4: Mean Table on Challenges and Barriers hinder Teachers from Effectively delivering STEAM Pedagogy in Indigenous Linguistic Communities

S/N	Statement	X	Decision
1.	Lack of resources is a significant barrier to STEAM teaching in indigenous languages.	2.8	Agree
2.	There is insufficient professional development for teachers on STEAM in indigenous languages.	2.6	Agree
3.	Sociocultural norms and gender biases devalue indigenous language use in STEAM learning.	2.8	Agree
4.	Translating STEAM concepts into indigenous languages creates major classroom challenges.	2.4	Disagree
5.	There is limited institutional/leadership encouragement for STEAM in indigenous languages.	2.6	Agree

Responses to research question 4 identified major constraints—including inadequate resources, weak professional development, sociocultural discrimination, and poor institutional support (X = 2.6–2.8)—as primary obstacles to the effective delivery of STEAM pedagogy in indigenous linguistic environments. The low translation barrier suggests that systemic and cultural factors pose greater challenges than language complexity itself.

Research Question 5: What strategies can transformational leadership and gender-responsive initiatives adopt to enhance teacher readiness for STEAM pedagogy in indigenous language classroom settings?

Table 5: Mean Table on Strategies Transformational Leadership and Gender-responsive Initiatives can Adopt to Enhance Teacher Readiness for STEAM Pedagogy in Indigenous Language Classroom Settings

S/N	Statement	X	Decision
1.	School leadership should provide continuous training on STEAM pedagogy using indigenous languages.	3.0	Agree
2.	Female teachers should be given equal opportunities to participate in STEAM professional development.	3.5	Strongly Agree
3.	Leaders should supply adequate STEAM instructional materials in indigenous languages.	3.0	Agree
4.	Mentorship and supportive supervision from school leaders will enhance STEAM instructional readiness.	3.0	Agree
5.	Incentives and recognition for teachers who teach STEAM in indigenous languages will improve motivation.	3.5	Strongly Agree

The responses show that transformational leadership and gender-responsive initiatives are strongly considered beneficial strategies for enhancing

teacher readiness for STEAM pedagogy in indigenous language settings. Participants strongly agree that equitable access for female teachers and motivational incentives (X = 3.5) are essential factors that promote participation and confidence. Furthermore, continuous professional development, provision of instructional materials, and supportive mentoring (X = 3.0 each) are also viewed as important leadership actions to strengthen teacher capability. These findings suggest that both leadership-driven support systems and gender equity-focused interventions play a pivotal role in improving the effective delivery of STEAM education in indigenous linguistic communities.

Discussion of Findings

The findings across the five research questions provide valuable insights into the possibility of using STEAM pedagogy in indigenous linguistic communities within Delta State. In addressing teacher preparedness, the results indicate that while teachers exhibit moderate confidence in their ability to deliver STEAM education in indigenous languages, their practical readiness remains low due to inadequate training, limited access to instructional resources, and insufficient exposure to innovative pedagogical strategies. This aligns with Richard (2017), who argued that effective teacher preparation must integrate both content mastery and culturally responsive pedagogical competence to meet learners' linguistic needs.

With regard to transformational leadership influence, the study shows that leadership support—through mentoring, provision of resources, and follow-up—contributes positively to teachers' readiness to teach STEAM using indigenous languages. However, the moderate mean ratings suggest that leadership influence, although beneficial, is not yet sufficiently impactful to sustainably elevate instructional capacity. This observation supports Day et al. (2016), who found that transformational leadership must be continuous and well-resourced in order to significantly improve teacher effectiveness.

The findings on gender equity in STEAM participation reveal that the use of indigenous languages enhances learner engagement, comprehension, performance, and problem-solving skills, particularly promoting inclusiveness for girls who may otherwise feel marginalized in conventional STEAM settings. McCarty (2021) similarly emphasized that mother-tongue instruction can dismantle linguistic barriers to learning and foster equitable academic participation.

Furthermore, the challenges identified including resource shortages, poor institutional support, and entrenched sociocultural biases—highlight systemic obstacles that compromise the effective delivery of STEAM pedagogy in indigenous language settings. Although teachers did not strongly identify language translation as a major barrier, sociocultural devaluation of indigenous languages remains a significant constraint. Saneka and de Witt (2019) similarly observed that negative

linguistic attitudes hinder curriculum implementation and educational quality in multilingual societies.

Finally, the findings demonstrate that teachers strongly support transformational leadership strategies and gender-responsive initiatives such as equal training opportunities for female teachers, incentives, sustained mentorship, and provision of instructional resources. These strategies are seen as essential to strengthening teacher motivation and instructional readiness. The responses affirm Day et al.'s (2016) position that leadership-driven empowerment helps build professional competence while reinforcing educational equity principles.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that while teachers in Delta State indigenous linguistic communities show moderate confidence in their ability to deliver STEAM instruction, their practical readiness remains limited due to inadequate training, insufficient instructional resources, and sociocultural biases that undermine the educational value of indigenous languages. Despite these challenges, the integration of indigenous languages has been shown to significantly enhance students' comprehension, motivation, engagement, and problem-solving abilities in STEAM learning, underscoring the transformative potential of culturally responsive pedagogy. Additionally, the study reveals that transformational leadership and gender-responsive strategies—such as continuous professional development, equitable opportunities for female teachers, supportive mentoring, adequate resource provision, and motivational incentives—play crucial roles in strengthening teacher capability and confidence. Therefore, improving STEAM education in indigenous language settings requires a holistic approach that prioritizes leadership support, gender equity, community involvement, and sustained capacity-building to ensure both teachers and learners are fully empowered within linguistically inclusive STEAM learning environments.

Recommendations

1. Implement targeted professional development programs to enhance teachers' proficiency in teaching STEAM subjects in indigenous languages.
2. Allocate sufficient resources and support to overcome barriers such as lack of resources and sociocultural devaluation of indigenous languages in STEAM education.
3. Expand the integration of indigenous languages in STEAM curricula to capitalize on their positive impact on student understanding, engagement, and performance.
4. Continuously evaluate and refine professional development initiatives to ensure they provide practical strategies and adequate resources for effective STEAM instruction in indigenous languages.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

THE GREEN GLASS CEILING: INTERSECTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE 12 PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE CHEMISTRY

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Introduction

The discourse on sustainability often remains soloed within the technical parameters of environmental chemistry and chemical engineering. However, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development suggests that environmental goals (SDGs 12 and 13) cannot be met without addressing systemic human inequities (SDGs 4 and 5). Contemporary educational leadership is currently navigating a transition toward Eco-Pedagogy, a framework that views scientific literacy through the lens of social responsibility. At this intersection, Green Chemistry serves as more than a methodology for waste reduction, it is a tool for institutional transformation. By replacing hazardous laboratory practices with safer, sustainable alternatives, educational leaders directly address the "Toxicity of Exclusion" the historical and physical barriers that have prevented women and marginalized groups from achieving parity in STEM leadership. This paper examines how the integration of Green Chemistry principles acts as a catalyst for dismantling these barriers.

The Toxicity of Exclusion

The global environmental crisis is a multifaceted failure of both molecular design and institutional governance. For decades, chemistry has operated under a "command-and-control" hierarchy that mirrors the exclusionary nature of traditional educational leadership. To pivot toward a sustainable future, we must adopt Intersectional Sustainability. This approach recognizes that we cannot engineer a non-toxic planet through toxic, male-dominated leadership structures. The dismantling of the Green Glass Ceiling is therefore a prerequisite for the success of the Green Chemistry movement.

Leadership as a Catalyst: Metaphors of the 12 Principles

Educational leaders can find a blueprint for governance within the 12 Principles of Green Chemistry. Specifically, Principle 1 (Waste Prevention) and Principle 12 (Inherent Safer Chemistry for Accident Prevention) serve as powerful metaphors for leadership.

Waste Prevention in Leadership: Just as Green Chemistry seeks to prevent waste at the source, inclusive leadership prevents the "brain drain" of female talent by removing systemic biases before they manifest as professional barriers.

Safer Environments: By adopting Inherent Safer Chemistry, leaders move beyond reactive "safety goggles" management to a proactive Eco-Pedagogy. This creates a laboratory environment where the physical risks often disproportionately impacting women due to reproductive toxicity are eliminated by design.

Bridging the Content Gap through Eco-feminist Pedagogy

A contemporary challenge in educational leadership is the disparity in Green Chemistry content knowledge. Historical exclusion has left many female chemistry educators with less access to advanced green-tech training. Following the tenets of Eco-feminist chemistry Pedagogy, leadership must rectify this by viewing nature and gender equity as interconnected.

Administrators must move beyond the Matilda Effect, the tendency to overlook female chemistry contributions by diversifying the curriculum to include women pioneers in sustainability. When leaders provide targeted professional development, they empower female educators to lead the "Green Transition," ensuring that the classroom is a space of social and environmental justice.

Economic Resilience and Gender-Responsive Governance

The "Triple Planetary Crisis" demands a shift toward gender-responsive budgeting in STEM departments. Critics often cite the cost of upgrading to green laboratories as a deterrent. However, inclusive leadership frames these costs as investments in SDG 5 (Gender Equality). By funding micro-scale green chemistry equipment, leaders democratize the laboratory, making chemistry accessible to students in under-resourced settings and ensuring that women are not priced out of high-level research opportunities. This alignment with UN Sustainable Development goals ensures long-term institutional resilience.

A New Governance Paradigm: Intersectional Sustainability

The transition to a non-toxic future requires a fundamental shift in how educational institutions are governed. Moving beyond the "management" of curricula, a new paradigm of Sustainable Leadership must emerge. This paradigm recognizes that the chemical industry will only become truly "green" when the leadership pipeline is truly "equitable." In this model, Educational Leadership acts as the primary filter for chemistry innovation. By adopting a governance style that is both gender-responsive and ecologically conscious, administrators ensure that the 12 Principles of Green Chemistry are not just laboratory rules, but institutional values. This paradigm shift moves chemistry out of the silo of "hard data" and into the realm of social justice, where SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and environmental health are viewed as a single, unified objective.

Conclusion

The "Green" in Green Chemistry must represent more than just environmental safety, it must represent the growth of equitable structures that empower diverse voices. The transition to a sustainable world is fundamentally dependent on an educational pipeline that is both ecologically conscious and gender-balanced. We do not just need safer molecules, we need a safer, more inclusive way of leading the people who create them. Intersectional sustainability is the only path forward.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS IN VISUAL ARTS AND SELF-RELIANCE

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Introduction

Leadership dynamics in visual arts occupy a distinguishing field where imagination, cultural manifestation and organizational impact interconnect. Leadership within the visual arts frequently arises through visualization, invention, mentorship and the capacity to initiate mutual meaning. Visual artists, curators, designers and cultural practitioners repeatedly function as both creators and leaders, modeling descriptions, guiding aesthetic arrangements and manipulating societal perception. Within this framework, leadership is not simply positional but interpersonal and adaptive, developing in reaction to artistic progressions, societal transformation and cultural uniqueness. Self-reliance is a fundamental component of leadership in the visual arts, predominantly in environment categorized by inadequate established provision, fiscal uncertainty and speedily altering innovative industries. Visual artists are time and again obligatory to adopt numerous leadership roles concurrently, intellectualizing concepts, supervision resources, advertising their works and satisfying proficient significance. This inevitability nurtures a structure of leadership grounded in independence, flexibility and entrepreneurial intelligent. Self-reliant artists cultivate the capability to introduce projects, establish networks, and preserve artistic training without relying on outward justification.

The intersection of leadership dynamics and self-reliance in visual highlights how imaginative leadership spreads beyond artistic aptitude to embrace calculated decision-making, moral obligation and collective engagement. Leaders in the visual arts impact not only appealing aftermaths but also fiscal empowerment, ethnic conservation and societal transformation. In many emerging and transitional societies, self-reliant artistic leadership functions as a passageway for employment creation, cultural preservation and youth empowerment, thereby placing visual arts as both an expressive and socio-economic vitality.

This chapter examines leadership dynamics in visual arts through the mirror of self-reliance, exploring how artists nurture leadership proficiencies, traverse restrains and modify innovative training into justifiable impact. By positioning visual arts leadership within wider leadership models and innovative economic dialogue, the book contributes to an understanding of how self-reliant artistic leadership can pilot innovation, ethnic stability and social improvement.

Concept of Leadership Dynamics

Leadership dynamics speak of the intricate, collaborative practices through which leaders impact individuals or groups, and organizations. It involves how followers, culture, framework, and organizations concurrently nurture leadership behaviour. Leadership dynamics lay emphasis on relationships, flexibility, supremacy flow, communication patterns, and situational responsiveness. According to

Northouse (2022), leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Similarly, Yukl (2013) defines leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives. These definitions emphasize leadership as a process, not merely a position, highlighting influence, group interaction, and goal attainment. Leadership dynamics therefore emphasises how influence emerges, advances, and is sustained over time.

Leader–Follower Relationship

A fundamental characteristic of leadership dynamics is the mutual relationship between leaders and followers. Leaders nurture follower inspiration, obligation, and performance. Followers inspire and impact leaders through feedback, opposition, funding, or teamwork. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) opine that Leader–Member Exchange Theory explains that leaders develop different quality relationships with followers, resulting in "in-groups" and "out-groups". Excellent relationships are categorized by mutual obligation, trust, and respect which boost performance and organizational social responsibility. Dynamic leadership identifies that effective leadership is not imposed but co-created.

Situational and Contextual Dynamics

Leadership effectiveness differs subject to contextual factors, including environmental uncertainty, task complexity, organizational culture, social and political climate. Hersey et al. (2013), argue that in Situational Leadership Theory, leaders must adjust their style directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating based on followers' competence and commitment. On the contrary, Fiedler, (1967) emphasizes that in Contingency Theory, leadership effectiveness depends on the match between a leader's style and situational favourableness. Thus, leadership dynamics involves uninterrupted analysis and alteration.

Power, Influence, and Authority

Dynamic leaders depend more on capable and classified authority, nurturing intentional obligation rather than coercion and compliance. In compliance to the above, French and Raven (1959) identify five bases of power to include legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, expert power and referent power. Furthermore, leadership dynamics consist of how leaders exercise authority as well as influence. Ethical leadership fortifies impact by making corresponding authority with trust and ethical integrity.

Communication and Emotional Dynamics

Communication is a vital element to leadership dynamics. A leader profile meaning through cognitive therapy and descriptions, manage conflict and complaint and as well influence sensitive environments. Goleman (1998) clarifies that leader

who can manage their own emotions and understand others' emotions create healthier and more productive organizations. Dynamic leadership encompasses demonstrative guideline, social consciousness, and understanding, specifically throughout the phases of transformation as well as emergency.

Transformational and Adaptive Leadership

Contemporary leadership dynamics passionately lay emphasis on change-oriented leadership. According to Bass, (1985), Transformational Leadership focuses on inspiring followers through vision, provide intellectual stimulation, demonstrate individualized consideration, and serve as role models. He emphasizes further that this approach is widely applied in education, religion, governance, and organizational leadership, while Heifetz, et al. (2009) emphasizes Adaptive Leadership as mobilizing people to tackle complex, non-technical challenges. These classes explain leadership as a continuous process of acquiring knowledge, innovation, and modification, rather than supervise.

Ethical and Cultural Dynamics

Leadership does not operate in a moral or cultural vacuum. Brown and Treviño (2006) opine that ethical leadership emphasizes fairness, accountability, and integrity. Cultural dynamics on the other hand, impact leadership possibilities, authority intuition, and communication styles, specifically in multi-ethnic or global sceneries. Effective leadership dynamics require social intellect and ethical obligation to sustain legality as well as reliance.

Leadership Dynamics in Organizations

In organizational settings, leadership dynamics have emotional influence on conflict management, administrative adjustment, decision-making processes, sustainability and team performance. Dynamic leadership encourages mutual headship, teamwork, and systems consideration, recognizing that leadership can emerge at various levels of an organization.

Leadership Dynamics in Visual Arts

Leadership dynamics speak of the roles, influence, exchanges, and decision-making processes that profile exactly how a leader functions within a resourceful environment. In visual arts, leadership dynamics are exceptional or purposeful because they galvanize at the intersection of cultural manifestation, modernism, teamwork, and creativity. Leadership in visual arts is frequently unsolidified moderately than categorized, focused or driven by vision, proficiency and creative authority rather than ceremonial power.

Forms of Leadership in Visual Arts:

A. ***Artistic Leadership:*** Artistic leaders control the creative direction of individuals or group such as theatre productions, galleries, studios, design firms and art collectives. Artistic leadership is established on technical

mastery, creative vision, and ability to inspire originality. Artists such as curators, art directors and lead designers demonstrate this form of leadership.

B. ***Collaborative leadership:*** Visual arts flourish on teamwork. Leadership often rotates depending on project phase, skill specialization and concept growth. This dynamic inspires collective ownership, innovation and shared knowledge.

C. ***Cultural and Social Leadership:*** Visual artists often undertake leadership roles in society by influencing community opinion and safeguarding ethnic identity. Addressing societal and political matters through visual descriptions, digital art, installations, photography and murals frequently serve as tools for advocacy and community leadership.

Significant Leadership Dynamics in Visual Arts

i. **Mentorship and Capacity Building:** Leadership in visual arts includes nurturing emerging artists through skillful transfer, critique sessions, and professional guidance. This guarantees stability, continuity and advancement within the creative industry.

ii. **Vision and Conceptual Direction:** Effective visual arts leadership requires unblemished theoretical vision that guides. These include style, medium and message. Leaders translate abstract concepts into noticeable artistic results.

iii. **Emotional Intelligence:** Because art is personal and expressive, leaders must of a necessity manage creative differences, personality clashes and expressive sensitivity. High demonstrative mental power reinforces trust and output.

iv. **Innovation and Risk-Taking:** Visual arts leadership inspires exploration and contest conventions. This dynamic is indispensible for artistic advancement, novel media acceptance and cross-disciplinary practices

Self-Reliance in Visual Arts:

Self-reliance in visual arts refers to the ability of an artist or creative leader to sustain themselves creatively, economically and intellectually without unnecessary dependence on external systems. It involves entrepreneurial thinking, independent, decision-making and resourcefulness.

Importance of Self-Reliance in Visual Arts

a. ***Creative Autonomy:*** Self-reliance safeguards artistic principles and morality by allowing artists to regulate content and style, resist marketable liability and preserve cultural legitimacy and responsibility.

b. ***Leadership Development:*** Self-reliant artists naturally advance into leadership because they build creative enterprises, introduce projects, and impact others through example.

c. ***Economic Sustainability:*** Self-reliant artists cultivate numerous income streams such as digital art sales, commissions, workshops, freelance design and teaching.

This reduces reliance on unsteady sponsorship or funding by government or individual.

Relationship between Leadership Dynamics and Self-Reliance.

Leadership dynamics and self-reliance are equally strengthening in visual arts. In the light of the above, leadership requires self-confidence and independence while self-reliance reinforces decision-making and control. Both naturally promote innovation, flexibility and sustainability. A self-reliant artist is better trained and positioned to lead creative teams, manage studios and impact society.

Conclusion

The foregoing shows that leadership dynamics is a multi-dimensional practice comprising teamwork, modification, impact, emotion, morals, and framework. Leadership dynamics offers a hearty structure or environment for explaining leadership as a developing system rather than a static role. Understanding these dynamics allows leaders to respond professionally to fluctuating surroundings or environments, engage followers expressively, as well as accomplish maintainable organizational objectives. On the other hand, leadership dynamics in visual arts are shaped by creativity, teamwork, demonstrative capacity and cultural responsibility. When combined with self-reliance, visual artists become not only creators and designers but visionaries, educators and societal leaders. This collaboration guarantees the sustainability of visual arts as both a cultural and economic vitality.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS AND MENTORSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Introduction

Leadership and mentorship are central to the effectiveness of educational systems worldwide, shaping institutional performance, professional growth, and learner development. In contemporary education, schools face complex challenges including technological change, curriculum reforms, and increasing diversity in learner needs. Leadership extends beyond administrative authority to relational and motivational influence, enabling leaders to inspire, guide, and support teachers and students in achieving collective goals (Northouse, 2022).

Educational psychology provides a framework for understanding how leadership and mentorship affect human behaviour, learning, and development. Leaders who recognize teachers' and learners' psychological needs can foster supportive environments, encourage reflective practice, and enhance instructional quality (Woolfolk, 2023). Mentorship complements leadership by providing structured guidance, modelling, and socio-emotional support, reinforcing the school's educational mission (Allen & Eby, 2021).

In Nigeria, leadership and mentorship are shaped by cultural, systemic, and institutional factors. Challenges such as limited resources, large class sizes, and policy inconsistencies require leaders to integrate psychological insight with practical strategies to enhance teacher performance and learner outcomes (Ofoegbu & Aina, 2022). This chapter examines leadership dynamics and mentorship through the lens of educational psychology, highlighting theoretical foundations, practical applications, challenges, and strategies for improving educational effectiveness.

Conceptual Clarification of Leadership

Leadership is multidimensional, reflecting both relational influence and goal-directed coordination. Northouse (2022) defines leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group to achieve a common goal, while Yukl (2020) emphasizes it as a process of social influence that maximizes the efforts of others toward goal achievement. In Nigeria, Ofoegbu and Aina (2022) describe

educational leadership as the ability of school administrators to inspire, motivate, and coordinate teachers and learners toward effective teaching, learning, and professional development.

From a psychological perspective, leadership encompasses understanding human cognition, motivation, emotion, and behaviour. Leaders influence performance through reinforcement, modelling, goal-setting, and feedback (Woolfolk, 2023). Leadership is distinct from management, which focuses on planning and control; leadership emphasizes vision, influence, and human development (Bush, 2020). Modern educational leadership increasingly prioritizes collaboration, participative decision-making, and ethical practice. Nigerian leaders navigate both systemic challenges and cultural expectations, requiring integration of psychological insight with practical leadership skills (Ofoegbu & Aina, 2022).

Leadership Dynamics

Leadership dynamics refer to the processes through which leadership operates in real-world educational settings, encompassing emotional intelligence, communication, decision-making, motivation, and conflict resolution. Emotionally intelligent leaders recognize and regulate their own emotions, understand others' emotions, and respond effectively, creating environments of trust and psychological safety (Northouse, 2022).

Motivation is central: leaders who understand intrinsic and extrinsic drivers enhance teacher engagement and commitment (Woolfolk, 2023). Effective communication ensures clarity, reduces misunderstandings, and strengthens collaboration. Conflict management involves addressing disputes constructively, modelling problem-solving, and fostering cooperative relationships. In Nigeria, leadership dynamics are shaped by resource limitations, cultural expectations, and systemic inefficiencies, requiring adaptive strategies that integrate psychological insights (Ofoegbu & Aina, 2022).

Mentorship in Education

Mentorship is a structured relational process where experienced educators provide guidance, modelling, and psychosocial support to less experienced teachers or learners. Allen and Eby (2021) define mentorship as a process facilitating career, professional, and personal development. Eby et al. (2022) highlight psychological mechanisms including social learning, reflection, and reinforcement, emphasizing mentorship's role in self-efficacy and professional identity formation. In Nigeria, mentorship involves supporting novice teachers in acquiring skills, confidence, and professional ethics (Ofoegbu & Aina, 2022).

Mentorship benefits mentees, mentors, and institutions. Mentees gain confidence, instructional competence, and problem-solving skills; mentors develop leadership capabilities and reflective practice; institutions benefit from improved retention, instructional quality, and a professional learning culture (Eby et al.,

2022). Psychologically, mentorship engages modelling, feedback, guided reflection, and social reinforcement, enhancing both cognitive and emotional competencies.

Educational Psychology

Educational Psychology examines learning, development, and behaviour in educational contexts. It provides leaders and mentors with insights into cognition, socio-emotional development, motivation, and individual differences (Woolfolk, 2023). Applying psychological principles allows leaders to design environments that optimize teacher performance and learner outcomes. Mentorship benefits from educational psychology by enabling goal-setting, feedback, skill development, and reflective practice. Leaders and mentors can tailor guidance based on developmental levels, learning preferences, and emotional needs, ensuring effective professional growth.

Leadership Dynamics and Mentorship in Educational Psychology

Leadership and mentorship are inseparable in educational contexts, forming the foundation for teacher development, learner achievement, and institutional effectiveness. Leadership provides direction, vision, and structural support, while mentorship delivers personalized guidance, modelling, and psychosocial support that fosters professional and personal growth. Educational Psychology frames these processes as engaging cognitive, emotional, motivational, and social dimensions of teachers and learners (Northouse, 2022; Woolfolk, 2023).

The interplay between leadership and mentorship is dynamic. Transformational leaders provide individualized consideration by addressing teachers' professional needs, giving constructive feedback, and creating opportunities for growth. Mentorship complements this by offering structured support, modelling effective practices, and allowing teachers to internalize professional behaviours and build confidence (Allen & Eby, 2021; Ofoegbu & Aina, 2022).

Psychological Mechanisms: Leadership-driven mentorship fosters self-efficacy, motivation, emotional regulation, reflective practice, and social learning. Observing competent role models and receiving feedback strengthens teachers' belief in their abilities (Bandura, 2020). Emotional support helps teachers manage stress and enhances classroom management. Reflective practice promotes critical thinking and adaptive teaching strategies, while social learning and modelling encourage replication of effective professional behaviours. Trust and psychological safety allow teachers to engage openly and experiment with new methods (Bush, 2020).

Practical Applications: Structured mentorship programmes, instructional supervision, professional learning communities, and socio-emotional support exemplify how leadership and mentorship combine in practice. Nigerian schools with mentorship-oriented leaders report higher teacher retention, instructional competence, and student achievement (Ofoegbu & Aina, 2022). International

research similarly shows reduced burnout, increased engagement, and stronger collaboration when leadership integrates mentorship (Allen & Eby, 2021; Eby et al., 2022).

Challenges in Leadership and Mentorship

Implementing effective leadership and mentorship in educational contexts is not without significant challenges. These challenges arise from structural, human, and contextual factors, and understanding them through the lens of educational psychology can help schools develop strategies for improvement.

1. ***Institutional Constraints:*** One of the most pervasive challenges is institutional constraints. Many schools, particularly in developing contexts like Nigeria, operate with limited resources, insufficient infrastructure, and overcrowded classrooms. Leaders attempting to implement mentorship programmes or provide individualized support often find themselves constrained by time, space, and material shortages. For example, a principal may recognize the need to mentor a group of novice teachers but cannot allocate sufficient periods for classroom observations or reflective discussions due to high teaching loads. Such resource limitations impede the practical implementation of psychologically informed leadership and mentoring strategies (Ofoegbu & Aina, 2022).
2. ***Skill Gaps Among Leaders and Mentors:*** Skill gaps among leaders and mentors constitute another major challenge. Effective mentorship requires knowledge of educational psychology principles, emotional intelligence, communication skills, and the ability to provide constructive feedback. Many educational leaders, however, ascend to positions of authority primarily based on seniority or administrative experience, rather than formal training in leadership or mentorship. As a result, they may lack the pedagogical or psychological expertise necessary to guide teachers effectively, reducing the impact of leadership-driven mentorship on learner outcomes (Woolfolk, 2023).
3. ***Interpersonal and Cultural Barriers:*** Interpersonal and cultural barriers also limit the effectiveness of leadership and mentorship. Hierarchical school cultures or traditional norms can discourage open communication, collaboration, or participative leadership. Teachers may resist guidance from leaders perceived as authoritarian, or mentors may encounter reluctance from mentees who fear judgment or negative evaluation. Emotional factors, such as mistrust, fear of criticism, or low self-efficacy among teachers, further hinder the development of constructive mentoring relationships (Bush, 2020).
4. ***Sustainability and Policy-Related Issues:*** Sustainability and policy-related issues challenge the long-term integration of leadership and mentorship. Many mentoring programmes are ad hoc, dependent on the personal initiative of a leader rather than institutionalized frameworks. Without clear policies, professional development incentives, or structured follow-up mechanisms, such initiatives may fade when key leaders leave or when priorities shift. This creates inconsistency in

teacher support and undermines the potential long-term benefits of psychologically informed leadership and mentoring (Allen & Eby, 2021).

5. ***Psychological and Motivational Factors:*** Psychological and motivational factors also play a role. Teachers experiencing burnout, low motivation, or high stress may not fully engage with mentorship initiatives, even when leaders provide support. Conversely, leaders under pressure or experiencing high workloads may struggle to sustain emotional engagement and effective mentorship. Understanding these dynamics from an educational psychology perspective is crucial, as it emphasizes the importance of both the leader's and the mentee's cognitive, emotional, and motivational states in determining the effectiveness of leadership-driven mentoring (Woolfolk, 2023).

Strategies for Strengthening Leadership and Mentorship

Overcoming the challenges of leadership and mentorship requires deliberate, evidence-based strategies that integrate Educational Psychology principles with practical leadership practices.

i. ***Professional Development and Capacity Building:*** One of the most critical strategies is continuous professional development for educational leaders and mentors. Leaders should undergo training in leadership theories, mentorship techniques, emotional intelligence, and principles of educational psychology. Such training equips leaders with the skills necessary to understand teacher motivation, foster reflective practice, and provide constructive feedback (Northouse, 2022; Woolfolk, 2023). In practice, professional development workshops can focus on conflict resolution, coaching techniques, stress management, and facilitating peer collaboration. Schools that invest in these programmes often see enhanced teacher performance, reduced attrition, and improved learner outcomes (Ofoegbu & Aina, 2022).

ii. ***Structured and Institutionalized Mentorship Programmes:*** Structured mentorship programmes provide a formal framework for supporting novice teachers and enhancing professional growth. These programmes should include clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations for both mentors and mentees. Elements such as goal-setting sessions, observation schedules, feedback mechanisms, and reflective exercises ensure consistency and accountability. Institutionalizing mentorship within school policy helps sustain these practices beyond the tenure of individual leaders, ensuring continuity and long-term professional development (Allen & Eby, 2021).

iii. ***Collaborative and Distributed Leadership Models:*** Leadership and mentorship are most effective when shared across the institution. Distributed leadership, where responsibilities are delegated and decision-making is collaborative, encourages peer mentoring, teamwork, and collective problem-solving. This model not only reduces the burden on individual leaders but also promotes a culture of shared learning and mutual support. Teachers engaged in such collaborative

structures develop stronger professional identities, higher self-efficacy, and greater resilience, contributing to overall institutional effectiveness (Bush, 2020).

Reflective and Evidence-Based Practice

Leaders and mentors should promote reflective practice, where teachers analyze their instructional strategies, classroom interactions, and professional decisions. Reflection enables both mentees and mentors to identify strengths, recognize areas for improvement, and implement psychologically informed interventions. Coupled with evidence-based practices, such as monitoring student progress and evaluating instructional outcomes, reflective practice strengthens the link between leadership, mentorship, and learner achievement (Collins et al., 2019; Woolfolk, 2023).

Emotional and Psychosocial Support

Leadership-driven mentorship should integrate emotional and psychosocial support. Providing empathy, understanding, and stress management strategies helps teachers cope with the pressures of classroom teaching, especially in resource-constrained environments. Mentors can guide teachers in setting realistic goals, managing student behaviour, and sustaining motivation. This approach aligns with educational psychology principles, emphasizing socio-emotional learning, motivation, and teacher well-being as critical components of professional growth (Northouse, 2022).

Technology-Supported Leadership and Mentorship

Incorporating technology into leadership and mentoring practices can enhance accessibility and effectiveness. Virtual coaching, online learning communities, and digital feedback platforms allow leaders and mentors to provide guidance, monitor progress, and facilitate professional learning across distance and time constraints. For instance, novice teachers in remote schools can benefit from video-based classroom observations, online reflective journals, and webinars led by experienced mentors, thereby extending the reach of leadership-driven mentorship programmes (Allen & Eby, 2021).

Policy Support and Institutional Incentives

Sustainable leadership and mentorship practices require policy frameworks and incentives that reinforce professional development. Schools and education authorities should create policies that recognize mentorship contributions, provide dedicated time for coaching, and integrate leadership development into career progression. Incentives, such as recognition awards, promotion considerations, or professional accreditation, motivate leaders and mentors to maintain high standards and foster continuous improvement (Ofoegbu & Aina, 2022).

Integrating Psychological Insights

Effective strategies are strengthened when informed by educational psychology. Understanding cognitive development, motivation, self-efficacy, socio-emotional needs, and reflective practices enables leaders and mentors to tailor their approaches to the specific needs of teachers and learners. For example, a teacher struggling with classroom management may benefit from both mentoring in instructional strategies and leadership support that reduces stress and models effective behaviour. This integration of psychology into practical strategies ensures that leadership and mentorship are not only procedural but also deeply human-centered and responsive to individual and contextual factors (Woolfolk, 2023).

Implications for Educational Practice and Policy

i. ***Strengthening Teacher Competence and Professional Identity:*** Integrating leadership and mentorship strengthens teacher competence by providing structured guidance, modelling effective instructional practices, and offering timely feedback. Through mentorship, teachers refine their pedagogical skills, adopt innovative teaching strategies, and gain practical insights that enhance classroom performance. Leadership involvement ensures that these developmental opportunities are aligned with institutional goals and professional standards, creating coherence between individual growth and organizational expectations. Over time, the combination of mentorship and leadership support helps teachers develop a strong professional identity, increasing confidence, commitment to the teaching profession, and a sense of purpose in their educational roles (Woolfolk, 2023).

ii. ***Enhancing Learner Engagement and Achievement:*** Effective leadership-driven mentorship indirectly boosts learner engagement and achievement by improving the quality of teaching delivered in classrooms. When teachers receive consistent guidance, reflective feedback, and emotional support, they are better prepared to implement instructional strategies that meet students' cognitive and socio-emotional needs. Mentored teachers are more likely to create dynamic, inclusive, and interactive learning environments that encourage participation, critical thinking, and sustained motivation. Consequently, learners benefit not only from improved instructional competence but also from teachers who are confident, innovative, and attuned to the diverse needs of their students, resulting in measurable gains in academic performance (Allen & Eby, 2021).

iii. ***Improving Leadership Effectiveness:*** Integrating mentorship into leadership practices enhances overall leadership effectiveness by promoting participative decision-making, reflective supervision, and relational influence. Leaders who actively mentor and support staff demonstrate commitment to professional growth, model best practices, and foster trust within the school community. This approach encourages collaboration, distributed responsibility, and a culture of continuous improvement, all of which are hallmarks of effective leadership. Moreover, leaders who understand the psychological and emotional needs of their staff can anticipate

challenges, motivate teachers, and implement interventions that optimize both human and organizational resources (Northouse, 2022).

Guiding Policy Decisions on Resource Allocation, Professional Development, and Mentoring Initiatives

Leadership and mentorship integration provides evidence-based insights that inform policy decisions regarding resource allocation, training programmes, and mentorship structures. Leaders and policymakers can identify which areas require targeted support, such as professional development in instructional techniques, mentoring for novice teachers, or emotional support for staff experiencing burnout. This informed decision-making ensures that financial, human, and material resources are efficiently deployed to maximize teacher and learner outcomes. By aligning policies with the observed benefits of leadership-driven mentorship, educational authorities can develop sustainable programmes that promote teacher growth and institutional effectiveness (Ofoegbu & Aina, 2022).

Encouraging Culturally Responsive, Context-Specific Leadership and Mentorship Strategies: Integrating leadership and mentorship encourages approaches that are culturally sensitive and tailored to the specific context of the school and community. Leaders and mentors who understand the socio-cultural backgrounds, values, and expectations of teachers and learners can adapt their guidance to be more relevant, respectful, and impactful. Context-specific strategies also enhance teacher engagement, reduce resistance, and promote meaningful professional development that resonates with local realities. Ultimately, culturally responsive leadership and mentorship foster inclusive school environments where teachers feel valued, learners are supported, and educational practices reflect both global best practices and local needs (Bush, 2020; Woolfolk, 2023).

Conclusion

Leadership and mentorship are interdependent processes that, when informed by educational psychology, significantly enhance professional development, learner outcomes, and institutional effectiveness. Psychologically informed leadership enables adaptive strategies, while mentorship provides guidance, modelling, and emotional support. Integration of these approaches is particularly critical in developing contexts where systemic challenges hinder educational quality. Sustainable, structured, and psychologically informed leadership and mentorship practices are essential for resilient and high-performing schools.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

DYNAMICS OF DEVELOPING EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURES IN NIGERIA: ROLES OF INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP

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Introduction

The awareness level of men and women in management positions generally determines the development of the institution or organization they oversee. Thus, understanding the dynamics of developing educational infrastructure in Nigeria is important for leaders at all levels. This is because leadership involves inspiring and guiding players to achieve common goals while making effective decisions and solving problems (Ega et al., 2025). Thus, the value, priority, and regard placed on human beings and the environment define the degree of development, including infrastructural development. Currently, there is global recognition that infrastructure such as electricity, road networks, buildings, and many other facilities are key to educational and economic growth. However, many in leadership positions do not acknowledge this and, as a result, never consider it a priority. What is most bizarre is that many who embark on projects do so with the intent to enrich themselves with public funds.

Infrastructures have become a vehicle through which a collection of developmental objectives is accomplished. It is critical to assess the status of an institution, such as accreditation and the individuals in leadership positions. Educational facilities are considered basic infrastructure, which include: electric supply, water supply, road network, pitches, classrooms, library and offices. The availability and adequacy of these enhance performance and improve living conditions of both the students and the staff (Adeyemi, 2024). The lack or poor infrastructure, on the other hand, not only reduce academic performance but slows down healthy development, social live and therefore scares students away from such institutions. According to Okpalaoka (2021), poor infrastructure negatively impacts productivity, learner interest, and overall academic outcomes. This problem of inadequate infrastructure is attributable to twin problems of poor leadership and corruption, as the major detrimental factors responsible for poor and inadequate public infrastructure projects in Nigeria (Nweze, 2016).

However, the resources to embark on the development of infrastructural facilities in all the public institutions in Nigeria are limited. Further, the process of carrying out developmental projects is a source of particular concern as the players

tend to be partisan in their dealings. This chapter discusses, the needs for infrastructural development in educational institutions, the problems associated with infrastructural development, and the roles of institutional leadership in infrastructural development in Nigeria.

Needs for Development of Educational Infrastructure in Nigeria

Currently, no country or organization can excel without adequate infrastructural development; the lack of it or inadequate infrastructures will make it unable to compete with its equals. This is because adequate infrastructure enhances productivity and improves the quality of life in any organization (Awaisu, 2023). Thus, infrastructures are the structures, facilities, and systems that contribute to the effective functionality of an institution. Infrastructure has been used as a basic tool to measure development, and in considering factors such as life expectancy, educational progress, and performance, since working with poor infrastructure leads to deteriorating quality of life (Okpalaoka, 2021; Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2026).

Poor infrastructure in institution include irregular electricity, poor workshop facilities, poor water supply, dilapidated classrooms and offices, inadequate workshops, inadequate laboratory and library, poor toilet facilities, all of which damage the school system and hinder performance. For instance, a technical student who studied with irregular electricity for an academic session would have missed vital practical trainings therefore become half-baked. These problems in schools not only affect academic performance, but also infringe on the rights to education, as well as the rights to safety and health of learners, in addition to staff ordeal (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2026). The effects of poor infrastructure in schools can also be seen in learners' higher enrolments in favour of institutions with better infrastructures, while low enrolment is common in institutions with poor infrastructures.

Problems Associated with Infrastructural Development in Nigeria

Infrastructure projects are inherently faced with diverse challenges ranging from capital flight, influence in project award, fraudulent practices, and lack of compliance with the procurement guidelines. A study by Zadawa and Hussinb (2015) reported poor risk management, dark purchasing, corruption, and lack of transparency to be the top issues. These problems initially brought about the enactment of the Procurement Act in 2007 due to widespread fraudulent public procurement practices and conflicts of interest. Another study by Amarachi et al. (2023) observed that the execution of infrastructural projects faces challenges in public procurement, including poor quality, fraudulent behaviour, and high costs. These problems are presented below.

1. ***Limited Fund:*** One of the main problems faced by infrastructure projects in Nigeria is the lack of adequate, consistent and prudent use of the available fund. Many projects are heavily dependent on government financing, which is often

unreliable due to economic fluctuations, particularly those tied to oil revenues. Poor funding results in frequent project delays and, in some cases, project abandonment (Mbamalu, 2018). This source highlights the critical role that financial instability from the government side plays in disrupting infrastructure projects, and supports the argument for alternative financing mechanisms like TEDFUND, which is already ongoing and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) (Akinsanya, 2019; Salau, 2021). Essentially, without adequate funding, public infrastructure projects cannot be launched, let alone completed; thus, funding is critical to the success or failure of any public infrastructure project (Ubani & Ononuju, 2013; Falaye, 2024).

2. ***Corruption and Governance Issues:*** Corruption and governance issues remain the major obstacles in Nigeria's infrastructure projects; misallocation of funds, nepotism, and bribery lead to cost inflation and compromised project quality (Falaye, 2024). Amadi and Atakpa (2018), in a study, provide a detailed analysis of corruption's negative effects on project management, demonstrating how leadership failures result in underperformance. In several cases, contracts are full of loopholes that allow leakages of funds, and projects are over-designed for the designers to earn more professional fees. These issues still continue despite the enactment of the procurement Act 2007, which provides rigorous procedures to clean up the high level of irregularities among procurement stakeholders in project implementations (Zadawa & Hussinb, 2015). It is to eliminate the high level of bad governance, anomalies in public procurement, fraud, and similar corrupt practices throughout the public sector (Ibrahim, Loch, & Sengupta, 2022).

The Public Procurement Act (PPA 2007) was particularly designed to ensure economy, efficiency, fairness, reliability, transparency, accountability and ethical Standards in the procurement process of the public sector. It is a means of introducing best ethical public procurement practices, providing equal opportunity and a competitive ground to bidders, ensuring adequate planning and budgeting for construction project development in order to achieve value for money (Shehu et al., 2014). However, corruption has become high and intolerable for good infrastructure such that EFCC, ICPC, and the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) have not been able to remove corruption practices from project procurement (Okpalaoka, 2021).

3. ***Poor risk Management and Mitigation:*** Infrastructure development projects in Nigeria suffer from capital flight, capital sink and capital stagnancy (Olufemi, 2012). This is characterised by the fact that a lot of materials and managerial services are procured outside the country, partly due to the low technological base of the state (Amarachi et al., 2023). More so, the contracts are full of loopholes that allow leakages of funds. In some cases, projects are over-designed for the designers to earn more professional fees, which are a percentage of the contract sum (Amarachi et al., 2023). Capital stagnancy due to abandoned projects is also rampant.

4. ***Influencing Project Award:*** This is common among leaders to benefit themselves or some individuals through a lack of transparency for shady purchasing. Dark purchasing, where the prices of products are inflated with the connivance of managers for the benefit of either the contractor or both. There are several cases where infrastructure contracts are inflated to receive kick-backs (Nwachukwu et al., 2010). In that case, certain contractors and friends, relatives and tribe-mates are chosen who end up getting the job and deliver poor work, and in the end, lead to failures of such infrastructure projects (Manjo, 2024). Uyo (2019) further stated that such favouritism locks out good contractors who could have undertaken the projects effectively. Such practices are common in the tendering processes for infrastructural projects in Nigeria (Manjo, 2024).

5. ***Poor Internal Communication:*** In the works of Zulch (2014), Ikechukwu et al. (2017), communication was found to be a leading cause of project failure in Nigeria, as their works affirmed the importance of communication on the successful implementation of projects globally. Also, Hussein (2018) submitted that communication challenges such as linguistic barriers, cultural barriers, poor feedback and unclear communication channels are factors responsible for public infrastructure project failure. In the same manner, Ogundelea and Somefunb (2008), and Dim (2018) further supported the factor of communication challenges by indicating the weaknesses between intergovernmental communications and stakeholders in Nigerian infrastructure projects. This shows that the problem of poor communication channels is a recurring problem in public infrastructure projects in Nigeria.

6. ***Inadequate Stakeholder Engagement:*** Stakeholder engagement is often insufficient in Nigerian infrastructure projects, leading to resistance from local communities and delays in project implementation (Falaye, 2024). Bello (2020) highlighted the importance of involving stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle, particularly in large-scale infrastructure projects where land acquisition and environmental concerns are major issues. Further, Oghenekaro (2021) identifies poor stakeholder consultation as a major cause of project delays, especially in projects that disrupt local communities without adequate compensation or dialogue.

7. ***Involvement of Quacks:*** Many projects are outsourced to foreign contractors with little or no knowledge of the job, which drives up costs and limits local capacity development (Falaye, 2024). This can sometimes be attributed to leadership interest in capital export. Other times, it is done to compensate colleagues financially who may have little or no knowledge of the projects, either as a consultant or a contractor, and may lead to poor performance. The favouritism in contract awarding processes as a recurring issue in the employment of incompetent hands to handle contracts is another dimension of corruption in the development of infrastructure (Sa'idu1 & Boyi, 2021). Uyo (2019) recognised poor contracting as

another factor responsible for public infrastructure project failure in Nigeria, indicating underperformance and embezzlement of project funds for ulterior gains.

8. ***Bureaucratic Delays:*** Bureaucracy is another challenging issue; government procedures often delay projects, approvals, permits, and procurement processes which extend project timelines and escalate costs (Falaye, 2024). Bureaucracy in Nigeria slows down project delivery and leads to resource wastage (Bankole, 2016). Delays in procedure and implementation of projects always lead to cost overruns as part of the consequences of excessive bureaucratic issues (Manjo, 2024). Sohail and Cavil (2009) also submitted that contractors often purposely overstate the time and cost requirements of a project to attract more funding.

Roles of Institutional Leadership in Infrastructural Development in Nigeria

Leadership as a person refers to individuals at the helm of the affairs of an organisation, who are statutorily empowered to see to the smooth operations of the organisation (Ogunruku, n.d.) has major roles to play in infrastructural development. This is because he has the privilege of influencing people within the organisation to commit and work towards the achievement of organizational goal or objectives in many ways.

1. ***Prioritise Development:*** As a leader, the best legacy is infrastructure development, where the facility will be seen by all and sundry. Though temptations to do something else may be there, however, the infrastructural development brings about an impact on the institution, both staff, students and the society and determines how dynamic the leader is viewed. It is also important to be systematic in the choice of projects such that essential infrastructures are not ignored for massive ones that are nonessential for personal benefits.
2. ***Engagement of Professionals:*** The institutional leadership has the privilege of ensuring that not only qualified but experienced professionals are engaged for the implementation of the procurement, but also in the project execution. Engagement of professionals will facilitate quality products, reduce cost, provide value for money and on-time delivery. On the other hand, when quacks or inexperienced professionals are used, the opposite is the case: Inexperienced consultants will not be able to initiate viable projects and manage the project well, while quack contractors will deliver shoddy jobs.
3. ***Strict Adherence to the Procurement Act:*** To be a dynamic leader in infrastructural development, it is necessary to strictly adhere to the Procurement Act 2007. The act clearly provides procedures to ensure economy, efficiency, fairness, reliability, transparency, accountability and ethical Standards in the procurement process in the public sector. Failure to follow it strictly is an offence punishable by law, which can be used against any leader at any time. That will also lead to other challenges in the project execution.
4. ***Avoid Influencing Project Award:*** Many leaders found it very difficult to do this; some event-registered companies use their cronies to secure contracts in institution

which they are leaders. Otherwise, for the sake of collecting kick-back maneuver to choose their preferred contractors still go ahead with open bidding for formality. Such situations exacerbate the challenges of infrastructural development. A dynamic leader should not only avoid influencing the project award but should also resist every temptation to do so.

5. ***Sound Internal Communication:*** Several people are involved in the infrastructural project, both professionals and nonprofessionals; therefore, there is a need for everyone to be on the same page. It is the duty of the leader, through the consultant, to ensure that there is sound internal communication. The consultant is supposed to have adequate knowledge of the project, starting from conception, designs, costing, tendering and bidding. He should also be familiar with mobilisation, site visitation, stage valuations, completion and handing over of the project. He should be able to galvanise everyone together, including the client, which is the Federal Government of Nigeria.

6. ***Adequate Stakeholder Engagement:*** This is very important for the standard, relevance and smooth execution of projects. For instance, if sets of machines are to be procured for a technical workshop, there is a need for the relevant Heads of Department and the Dean of the school be involved to contribute their quota. Anything short of that will result in supplying irrelevant equipment, amounting to a waste of resources. Similarly, if a new institution is to be established or an old one is relocating to another site, the community that owns the land should be adequately engaged to avoid rancour that will delay the project execution.

Conclusion

The infrastructural deficits in educational institutions in Nigeria today are not just because of inadequate funding but also due to corruption among those responsible for the management of the funds. The infrastructural deficits diminish health, social lives and academic performance of both the staff and the students and can be responsible for low enrollment in some educational institutions. However, a dynamic leader who plays his roles according to the rules is likely to be rated highly, and the legacy shall remain as long as the infrastructural projects executed remain. Leadership has several temptations however, the most aggressive among them is corruption. To have an enduring legacy, a leader must be able to navigate through all the tempting dynamics in infrastructural development.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

LEADING THE LEDGER: WHY LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND STYLES ARE INDISPENSABLE FOR FUTURE NIGERIAN ACCOUNTANTS

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Introduction

Within Nigeria's economic context, accountants have historically been perceived as custodians of historical financial accuracy, specializing in compliance, reporting, and taxation. However, the profession now faces a pivotal juncture amid rapid digitalization, changing regulatory frameworks, and an urgent demand for ethical stewardship. The trajectory of accounting in Nigeria extends beyond technical mastery of standards; it is inherently linked to leadership. Emerging accountants must, therefore, be prepared not only with specialist knowledge but also with the leadership capabilities and flexible approaches required to steer organizations through intricate challenges, foster trust, and promote sustainable value.

This article asserts that leadership has transitioned from a supplementary ability to a central professional requirement for accountants. Drawing upon current Nigerian academic discourse and practical observations, it will examine key leadership competencies - ethical governance, strategic foresight, change management, effective communication and influence, and collaborative team development alongside pertinent leadership approaches such as transformational, servant, and adaptive leadership. Integrating these components outlines a model for the accountant as a strategic leader, a figure vital to Nigeria's socio-economic advancement.

Discourse on leadership in Nigerian accounting is expanding. Academics contend that the country's distinct issues of corporate governance lapses, economic instability, and integrity shortfalls necessitate that accountants transcend conventional functions. According to Mainoma (2018), associate accounting leadership with national progress, maintaining that accountants must champion transparency and accountability to stimulate economic development.

According to Mohammed and Okolo (2020), on the "expectation-performance gap" identified leadership and managerial skills as key deficiencies among accounting graduates, highlighting a need for curriculum transformation. Similarly, Oyetunji (2019), averred positioning the accountant as an organization's ethical compass, a

role demanding significant moral leadership. Global theories like Bass's Transformational Leadership and Greenleaf's Servant Leadership are being adapted by Nigerian researchers. Adebisi and Iyoha (2022), investigated adaptive leadership within Nigerian finance, stressing the importance of leaders who can manage regulatory shifts and market instability. This article consolidates these perspectives to formulate a leadership framework specific to the Nigerian accounting environment.

Core Leadership Skills

1. ***Ethical Governance and Integrity Stewardship:*** In an environment frequently affected by scandals and diminished trust, the paramount leadership skill for Nigerian accountants is a steadfast dedication to ethical governance. This surpasses personal integrity, encompassing the ability to institute, advocate, and uphold an organizational culture of ethics. According to Sakariyau and Lawal (2017), ethical leadership serves as a crucial countermeasure to pervasive corruption.

The accountant-leader must personify and embed the ethical codes of professional bodies such as ICAN and ANAN. This entails making difficult, principle-based decisions - resisting earnings manipulation, reporting misconduct, and designing resilient internal controls. This competency demands moral bravery, a thorough grasp of governance codes, and the capacity to persuade boards to value long-term sustainability over immediate profits.

2. ***Strategic Visioning and Commercial Insight:*** Future accountants must contribute to strategy formulation, not merely report on financial results. Strategic visioning involves connecting financial information to wider business goals and market possibilities. It requires commercial insight, a deep familiarity with the Nigerian business landscape, including sectoral risks, consumer trends, and macroeconomic factors.

Academic work links strategic management accounting to competitive advantage in Nigerian firms. The accountant-leader employs analytical tools for foresight: modeling scenarios for currency volatility, advising on infrastructure investments, or directing digital adoption. This competency transitions the accountant from a supportive role to a strategic partnership, utilizing financial intelligence to guide business growth.

3. ***Change Management and Adaptive Resilience:*** Nigeria's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) context elevates change management to a critical leadership skill. Accountant should play key role in helping organization navigate financial changes and implication of changes and how they can be managed is key to successful Accountant/ Client relationship. Accountants are central to organizational changes, such as implementing new tax laws, adopting reporting standards, or integrating new systems. Leading individuals through these transitions, overcoming resistance, and securing commitment is essential.

This is closely associated with adaptive resilience - the ability to maintain effectiveness during disruptions. Research underscores leadership's role in organizational stability. An accountant-leader must demonstrate composure during economic downturns, adjust budgetary controls responsively, and innovate in crises. This skill involves offering steady, strategic guidance amid continuous change.

4. *Persuasive Communication and Stakeholder Influence:* Technical expertise limited to financial statements constitutes a leadership shortfall. The contemporary accountant must convey complex information clearly, persuasively, and empathetically to varied audiences, including boards, investors, regulators, and non-financial staff. This skill is foundational to interdisciplinary effectiveness.

It entails translating technical requirements into actionable insights, presenting audit results to prompt corrective measures, and advocating for financial literacy internally. Externally, accountants must shape policy by communicating evidence-based positions to governmental authorities. It is the skill of building agreement, managing expectations, and narrating the story underlying the data.

5. *Collaborative Team Building and Mentorship:* They focus on inspiring and motivating team members Leads through a compelling vision and charisma. Complex problem-solving requires collaborative, cross-disciplinary teams. The accountant-leader must be proficient in forming, motivating, and guiding diverse teams, necessitating emotional intelligence and conflict resolution skills.

Mentorship is integral to this. The profession's sustainability relies on leaders who actively develop talent. While professional bodies mandate mentorship, genuine leadership embodies it. Senior accountants have a responsibility to guide younger professionals, particularly in navigating ethical challenges and career development, ensuring the profession's continual renewal and ethical foundation.

Applicable Leadership Styles

In today's rapidly changing and often unpredictable organizational environment, leaders are required to be both effective and capable of adapting to varying contexts. The suitability of any leadership style depends on how well it fits with an organization's objectives, cultural subtleties, and immediate challenges. To achieve lasting performance and organizational resilience, three leadership styles have gained particular relevance: transformational leadership, servant leadership, and adaptive leadership (Nwadei 2017; Oghojafor et al., 2018; Obadan, 2019). These styles are further discussed below:

1. *Transformational Leadership:* This style, extensively researched in Nigerian settings, is highly applicable. Transformational accountant-leaders inspire teams toward a shared vision of integrity, innovation, and excellence (Nwadei 2017). They encourage innovative thinking to address persistent issues and support individual professional growth. This approach instills purpose and vitality, which are key for fostering change in Nigerian organizations.

2. ***Servant Leadership:*** This type of leader puts the needs of others first. Empowers and supports team members in achieving their goals. Focusing on empathy, stewardship, and the development of others, this style aligns with the accounting profession's ethical and developmental ethos. The servant-leader accountant prioritizes the needs of their team, clients, and the public interest (Oghojafor et al., 2018). In Nigeria's often hierarchical structures, this fosters trust and psychological safety, enabling ethical conduct and innovation, and resonates with the view of accounting as a service to national development.

3. ***Adaptive Leadership:*** This framework for leading in uncertainty is particularly critical for Nigeria. It involves differentiating technical problems from adaptive challenges that require shifts in values and behaviors. Nigerian accountant-leaders routinely face adaptive challenges, such as transforming organizational culture or professionalizing family businesses (Obadan 2019). This style requires viewing situations from a broader perspective, managing stress, and empowering collective problem-solving abilities essential for Nigeria's complex environment.

4. ***Synthesis: Integrating Skills and Styles:*** Effective leadership involves the situational integration of skills rather than rigidly applying a single style (Obadan 2019). The Nigerian accountant-leader must be versatile: They develop and implement long-term strategies Shapes the organization's future direction:

i. In crises, a more directive style combined with ethical governance and crisis communication is necessary.
ii. For long-term strategic initiatives, transformational or adaptive styles emphasizing strategic vision and change management are optimal.
iii. In developing team capability and ethics, a servant leadership approach focused on mentorship is most effective.

5. ***Transactional leader:*** They focus on maintaining routine operations. Uses rewards and punishments to motivate team members.

6. ***Charismatic leader:*** This type of leader exudes confidence, enthusiasm, and charm. They inspire followers through their personalities

7. ***Laissez-faire leader:*** They empower team members with autonomy offer minimal direction and guidance.

8. ***Situational leader:*** The type of leader adapts leadership style based on the situation and team needs. Balances between dressing and supporting as required carver path to leadership positions in corporate.

Roles and Responsibilities of Leadership to Future Accountants

Below are the roles according to Career Growth (2005)

1. **Visionary role:** Setting a clear vision and long-term objectives for the organization. Inspiring and aligning the team with the vision
2. **Strategic planner:** Developing and executing strategic plan to achieve organizational goals. Identifying opportunities threats, and resource allocation

3. **Team builder**: Building diverse, high-performing teams. Nurturing talent, promoting collaboration, and resolving conflicts
4. **Decision-maker**: Making informed decisions to drive the organization forward Evaluating risks and considering the impact of choices.
5. **Coach and mentor:** Providing guidance, mentorship, and professional development to team members. Empowering employees to reach their full potential
6. **Change agent:** Leading and managing change initiatives. Adapting to new market trends, technologies, and challenges.
7. **Communicator:** Effectively conveying ideas, goals, and expectations. Fostering open and transparent communication within the organization

Steps to Developing Leadership to Future Accountants

The following, according to Career Growth (2005) are steps to developing leadership to future accountant.

1. **Gain experience:** Build a strong foundation through work experience and develop a deep understanding of your industry.
2. **Develop soft skill:** Hone essential soft skills like communication, teamwork, and adaptability
3. **Pursue education Consider:** Executive education programmes to enhance leadership capabilities
4. **Seek mentorship:** Find mentors who can provide guidance and share their leadership experiences
5. **Showcase leadership:** Take on leadership responsibilities in your current position to demonstrate your abilities
6. **Stay informed:** Stay up-to-date with industry trends, technologies and leadership best practices

Challenges Future Accountants May Encounter in Developing Leadership Abilities

1. **Lack of experience:** Young accountants may face a lack of practical experience in leadership roles. This can make it challenging to effectively lead and manage teams
2. **Limited opportunities:** Limited access to leadership positions or projects within their organizations may hinder young accountants' ability to gain hands-on leadership experience
3. **Self-doubt:** Young accountants may struggle with self-doubt and lack confidence in their abilities as emerging leaders
4. **Conflict of Interest:** Accountant frequently face situations, where their personal interest conflict with their professional responsibilities.
5. **Client Confidentiality:** Accountant offers deals with confidential client information ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of client data is crucial.
6. **Ethical decision making in financial reporting:** Young accountants may come across situations where they have to make ethical decision, regarding financial

reporting practices. They need to navigate issues such revenue cognition, reporting accuracy and proper disclosure, ensuring compliance with regulating standards and ethical guidelines.

Remedies to Overcome the Challenges

1. **Seeking feedback and constructive criticism:** Actively seeking feedback from supervisors, colleagues, and team members enables young accountants to identify areas for improvement and refine their leadership skills. Constructive criticism helps them to understand their strengths and weaknesses, allowing for targeted development efforts.
2. **Embracing failure and learning from setbacks**: Failure is a natural part of the learning process. Young accountants should view setbacks as opportunities for growth and learning. By embracing failure, accepting responsibility, and reflecting on lessons learned, they can develop resilience and become better leaders
3. **Building a supportive network of peers and mentors**: Cultivating a network of peers and mentors who can provide guidance, advice and support is essential for young accountants Mentors can offer
4. Young accounts must understand how to identify and manage conflict of interest to maintain objectivity and uphold ethical standard
5. Accounts must understand and adhere to professional guidelines and legal requirement to protect client information and maintain trust.

Implications For Accounting Education and Professional Training

Cultivating these future leaders requires significant reform in accounting education and training (Nwadei 2017, Oghojafor et al 2018, and Obadan 2019):

i. Curriculum Integration: Leadership and ethics should be core components from undergraduate to professional levels, using Nigeria-specific case studies.
ii. Pedagogical Shift: Emphasis should move to experiential learning through simulations, role-playing, and real-world projects.
iii. Assessment Reform: Evaluations should test leadership judgment via complex, scenario-based problems requiring ethical and strategic decisions.
iv. Mandatory Mentorship: Structured, monitored mentorship programmes within firms and professional bodies must be implemented and valued.
v. Continuing Professional Development (CPD): CPD should expand beyond technical updates to include leadership, communication, and change management.

Conclusion

The future success of Nigerian accountants will be measured by their leadership capacity as much as their technical skill. They must serve as ethical anchors, strategic guides, agents of change, effective communicators, and developers of talent. By thoughtfully integrating transformational, servant, and adaptive leadership approaches, they can address the multifaceted demands of Nigeria's evolving economy.

This leadership imperative is a shared duty. Academics, professional bodies, practitioners, and individuals must collectively commit to cultivating these capabilities. Through such efforts, the accounting profession will not only ensure its continued relevance but will also affirm its essential role in promoting ethical governance, economic stability, and transformative growth for Nigeria. While financial records document the past, the accountant-leader actively shapes what is to come.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

MENTORSHIP AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INTEGRATION AS PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYEES' SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST-CENTURY WORKPLACE

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Introduction

In recent times, workforce around the globe has undergone transformation which has made skill acquisition an essential requirement for meeting individual and organizational needs. Job responsibilities are drastically evolving through the instrumentality of Digital transformation, automation, and artificial intelligence (AI) hence enabling new paths for skill acquisition and shifting demands through organizational learning. Therefore, with our industries as digital ecosystems, personnel must train for technical skills, problem-solving, resilience, teamwork, digital literacy, and more. Expectedly therefore, what most organizations are seeking after is a balance between human-oriented endeavours, such as mentorship, and technology-oriented options, like AI-powered learning systems, to achieve the ideal blend for employee effectiveness and efficiency.

Skill development refers to the continuous process of enhancing employees' technical, cognitive, and soft skills to improve job performance and employability (Noe et al., 2014). In Nigeria, skill development challenges are often linked to inadequate training infrastructure, outdated curricula, and limited access to continuous professional development (Adewale & Anthonia, 2021). Human capital theory suggests that when investment in skill development is sustained, it brings about enhanced productivity and organizational competitiveness, a principle increasingly relevant for Nigerian organizations operating in a volatile economic environment (Becker, 1993).

Mentorship has been identified as a culturally compatible and cost-effective approach to employee skill development in Nigeria. It involves experienced employees guiding less experienced colleagues through knowledge sharing, coaching, and role modeling (Eby et al., 2008). In Nigerian, mentorship is particularly effective in transferring tacit knowledge, work ethics, and professional values that are often not captured in formal training programmes (Akinwale & George, 2020).

The emergence of artificial intelligence has significantly reshaped employee skill development globally and is gradually gaining traction in Nigeria. AI-driven

learning platforms, virtual simulations, and data-driven training systems enable personalized and flexible learning experiences AI adoption in training remains uneven due to infrastructural and digital divide challenges; however, sectors such as banking, telecommunications, and education are increasingly leveraging AI-enabled tools for employee upskilling (OECD, 2019). AI supports skill development by identifying individual learning needs, tracking progress, and recommending targeted learning pathways, thereby improving training efficiency (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016).

Empirical studies in Nigeria have shown that organizations that invest in employee training and development record improved efficiency, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. However, traditional training methods alone have proven insufficient in addressing emerging skill requirements, particularly digital and problem-solving skills demanded by modern workplaces. This study is embarked upon to examine the impact of mentorship and artificial intelligence integration on employees' Skill development in the 21st-century workplace. The scope of this study will be limited to employees of tertiary education in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How can mentorship training programmes impact on employees' skill development in the 21st century workplace?
2. What influence does artificial intelligence have on employee's skill development in the 21st century work place
3. What impacts will combine integration of mentorship and artificial intelligence have on employees' skill development?

Hypothesis

H_{01}: There is no significant difference between senior and junior employees' perceptions regarding impacts of mentorship training and artificial intelligence on employees' skill development in the 21st-century workplace.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study to enable elicitation of opinion from respondents. The study was carried out in Delta state, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised employees, junior and senior staff, in selected tertiary institutions in Delta State. A sample of 40 respondents made up of 20 senior and 20 junior staff were drawn from the population using stratified sampling techniques. Data were collected using a well-structured questionnaire item divided into relevant sections. Responses were measured using five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Decision threshold of 3.0 was used to arrive at a decision. Questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation. It was administered online using Google forms which enabled wide coverage of respondents and ensured convenience and efficient data collection.

Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: How can mentorship training programs impact on employees' skill development in the 21st century workplace?

Table 1: Impact of mentorship programmes on employees' skill development in the 21st Century Workplace

S/N	Statement	Mean Score	SD
1	It enhances employees' professional skills	4.45	0.94
2	Mentorship initiatives provide constructive feedback that enhances employees' performance	4.35	0.00
3	Mentorship programmes improve employees' technical skills on the job	4.55	0.51
4	Mentorship relationship enhances employees' problem-solving and critical-thinking abilities	4.50	0.51
5	Through various mentorship sessions, employees have become more confident in their job	4.40	0.6
6	Mentorship has contributed to employees' career progression and readiness for future roles.	4.55	0.51
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation Scores	**4.40**	**0.51**

From Table 1 it can be seen that mentorship alone had high mean scores with moderately low standard deviations. This result reveals that respondents are in agreement that mentorship plays positive role on employees' skill development. Table also reveal that career readiness, confidence, problem solving abilities, and technical competence of employees are greatly improved through traditional mentorship.

Research Question 2: How can artificial intelligence impact on employees' skill development in the 21st century work place?

Table 2: Impact of Artificial intelligence on employees' skill development in the 21st Century Workplace

S/N	STATEMENT	Mean Score	SD
1	AI technologies make learning faster and more personalized	4.15	0.75
2	AI tools help improve Employees' technical skills.	4.15	0.75
3	AI applications enhance Employees' problem-solving abilities	3.95	0.76
4	AI provides instant feedback that improves Employees' learning outcomes	4.25	0.72
5	AI technologies support skill acquisition beyond traditional classroom methods	4.15	0.67
6	AI tools motivate employees to learn new skills continuously.	4.20	0.70
7	AI plays a significant role in my overall skill development	4.11	0.66
6	The use of AI increases Employees' productivity	4.05	0.51
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation Scores	4.12	0.78

Table 2 shows that AI has a high mean scores value, however, slightly lower than those of mentorship, with moderate standard deviations. This result reveals that respondents generally perceive AI as an effective tool for skill development, though with more varying opinions. The slight inconsistency in responses may be accredited to unequal access to AI tools, differences in digital literacy, and infrastructural challenges. Nonetheless, the results affirm that AI significantly contributes to skill development by assisting in personalized learning, providing instant feedback, aiding continuous practice, and improving productivity.

Research Question 3: What impacts will integration of mentorship and artificial intelligence have on employees' skill development in the 21st century workplace?

Table 3: Impact of mentorship and artificial intelligence integration on employees' skill development in the 21st Century Workplace

S/N	STATEMENT	Mean Score	SD
1	Combining mentorship and AI improves employees' creativity and innovation more than using either	4.25	0.44
2	Mentorship and AI together help learners adapt better to new technologies and work settings	4.15	0.88
3	Learning with Artificial Intelligence tools works better when guided by a mentor than when using AI alone	4.25	0.79
4	Learners feel more confident learning new skills when mentorship and AI are used together	4.35	0.75
5	Mentorship and AI together help build Employee stronger technical skills	4.20	0.89
6	Combining mentorship and AI leads to higher-quality skill development	4.35	0.49
7	Using AI under mentor guidance leads to better learning outcomes	4.40	0.50

8	Learners become more employable when mentorship and AI are used together	4.25	0.79
9	The synergy between mentorship and AI prepares employees for future job demands	4.20	0.89
10	Employees develop stronger problem –solving and critical thinking abilities when mentorship and AI are used together	4.0	0.0
11	Mentorship and AI together better prepares learners for career growth and future roles	4.20	0.41
	Grand Mean	4.23	

Table 3 shows that combined use of mentorship and AI recorded the highest mean scores and the lowest standard deviations among all measured approaches. This indicates both stronger perceived effectiveness and high level of consensus among respondents. These outcomes suggest a relationship that is synergistic between mentorship and AI, where the strengths of one complement for the limitations of the other. While AI improves efficiency, accessibility, and personalization, mentorship provides human judgment, ethical guidance, and contextual interpretation. Together, they create a holistic learning environment that supports sustainable skill development and adaptability in the modern workplace

Table 4 Mean scores and standard deviation of senior and junior employees.

		Senior Employee		Junior employee	
S/N	STATEMENT	Mean Score	SD	Mean	SD
1	Combining mentorship and AI improves Employees' creativity and innovation more than using either	4.25	0.44	4.15	0.88
2	Mentorship and AI together help learners adapt better to new technologies and work settings	4.15	0.88	4.25	0.85
3	Learning with Artificial Intelligence tools works better when guided by a mentor than when using AI alone	4.25	0.79	4.40	0.95
4	Learners feel more confident learning new skills when mentorship and AI are used together	4.35	0.75	4.25	0.91
5	Mentorship and AI together help build Employee stronger technical skills	4.20	0.89	4.30	0.92
6	Combining mentorship and AI leads to higher-quality skill development	4.35	0.49	4.25	0.91
7	Using AI under mentor guidance leads to better learning outcomes	4.40	0.50	4.25	0.91
8	Learners become more employable when	4.25	0.7	4.30	0.92

	mentorship and AI are used together		9		
9	The synergy between mentorship and AI prepares employees for future job demands	4.20	0.89	4.30	0.90
10	Employees develop stronger problem –solving and critical thinking abilities when mentorship and AI are used together	4.0	0.0	4.25	0.91
11	Mentorship and AI together better prepares learners for career growth and future roles	4.20	0.41	4.00	0.80
	Grand Mean	4.23		4.27	

Hypothesis

H_0: There is no significant difference between senior and junior employees' perceptions regarding the combined impacts of mentorship and artificial intelligence on employees' skill development in the 21st-century workplace.

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis of Hypothesis

Variables	N	G. Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-table	Level of sig.
Senior employee	20	4.23	0.66				
Junior employee	20	4.27	0.90				
				38	-0.16	2.02	0.05

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether a significant difference exists between senior and junior employees' perceptions of the combined impact of mentorship and artificial intelligence (AI) on employee skill development. The results indicate that senior employees reported a grand mean score of 4.23, while junior employees reported a slightly higher grand mean score of 4.27. The observed mean difference between the two groups was marginal (0.04). The calculated t-value ($t = 0.16$) was tested against the critical t-value ($t = 2.02$) at 0.05 level of significance with 38 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated t-value was less than the critical value, the difference between the two groups was found to be statistically insignificant. This result suggests that both senior and junior employees hold similar perceptions regarding the effectiveness of combining mentorship and AI in enhancing skill development.

Discussion Of Findings

This study examined how mentorship, artificial intelligence (AI), and their combined use impact employees' skill development in the 21st-century workplace. The discussion pulls on descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and is situated within contemporary workforce demands and global development priorities.

In the modern workplace, this result emphasizes the lasting value of human interaction, pragmatic learning, and adapted guidance. Despite the fast technological advancements, employees still rely heavily on mentors for contextual

understanding, emotional support, and the transfer of implied knowledge that automated systems cannot easily replicate, artificial intelligence, serves as a potent enabler of self-directed, technology-driven learning, particularly in fast-evolving job roles.

These findings align strongly with the workforce and education priorities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The strong performance of both AI and mentorship—especially when combined—demonstrates how technology-enhanced mentorship can promote continuous learning, up skilling, and reskilling across the lifespan of employees. The integration of AI with mentorship supports innovative learning pathways that extend beyond traditional classroom settings.

Furthermore, the results also shows that effective skill development through mentorship and AI enhances employee productivity, adaptability, and employability. By adopting mentorship –AI hybrid model, organizations can better prepare their workforce for evolving job demands, thereby supporting decent work and long-term economic resilience.

Lastly, the absence of a statistically significant difference in the formulated hypothesis, may be attributed to increased organizational exposure to digital learning platforms and mentoring structures, which likely influences employees uniformly regardless of seniority. Both senior and junior employees may recognize that the synergy between mentorship and AI is essential for fostering creativity, adaptability, employability, and problem-solving skills in a rapidly evolving work environment.

These findings support contemporary workforce development theories that emphasize hybrid learning models, where human and technological resources work collaboratively rather than independently. Organizations aiming to strengthen employee skill development should therefore consider structured mentorship programs that strategically incorporate AI tools to maximize learning outcomes across all employee categories.

Conclusion

Based on the mean and standard deviation results, this study concludes that mentorship alone and AI alone both have a strong positive impact on skill development in the 21st-century workplace. However, the combined application of mentorship and AI demonstrates the greatest impact, as evidenced by the highest mean scores and the lowest variability in responses.

While mentorship remains essential for human-centered learning and professional guidance, AI offers scalable, flexible, and efficient learning support. The integration of both approaches provides a balanced and sustainable model for workforce development, capable of meeting the complex demands of modern organizations and global development goals.

Recent literature emphasizes the complementary relationship between mentorship and artificial intelligence in employee skill development. While AI enhances access to knowledge and technical skills, mentorship supports contextual understanding, ethical reasoning, and interpersonal competence (Salas, 2012). In the Nigerian context, integrating AI-driven training with structured mentorship programs can bridge the gap between technological competence and human-centered skills.

Studies suggest that such hybrid approaches promote continuous learning, adaptability, and innovation, which are essential for Nigeria's transition to a knowledge-based economy (WEF, 2020). Organizations that strategically align mentorship with AI technologies are better positioned to develop resilient and future-ready employees.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Adoption of Hybrid Mentorship Models
2. Organizations should integrate AI-driven learning tools with traditional mentorship programs to maximize skill development outcomes.
3. Investment in AI Infrastructure and Training
4. Employers should invest in AI technologies and provide adequate training to ensure employees can effectively utilize AI for learning and performance improvement.
5. Strengthening Mentorship Structures
6. Formal mentorship frameworks should be established to ensure consistent mentor availability, quality interaction, and structured guidance.
7. Policy and Educational Support
8. Policymakers and educational institutions should promote mentorship–AI integration as part of workforce development strategies.

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CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

VIRTUAL LIBRARY SERVICES AS AN INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGICAL MEDIUM FOR SUSTAINABLE INFORMATION SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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Introduction

Academic libraries have traditionally adopted a hybrid approach to information provision, combining print-based collections with emerging electronic resources to support teaching, learning, and research within their institutions. This dual system involves the acquisition, organization, storage, and dissemination of information in both physical and digital formats for members of the academic community. For many years, predominantly print-based collections, supplemented by limited electronic resources, were sufficient to advance institutional educational objectives. However, the rapid evolution of global educational practices toward online and technology-driven models has fundamentally altered the landscape of information service delivery (Adeniran & Unuigboje, 2018; Yarema, 2022).

The integration of modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) into library operations has significantly transformed user services, elevating them beyond the confines of physical library buildings. Contemporary digital library models facilitate interactive engagement with remote users, enabling equitable access to resources regardless of geographical location. Through digital platforms, users can now consult materials, communicate with librarians, and retrieve information with the same level of efficiency as on-site patrons. The introduction of electronic books, subscription databases, institutional repositories, and digital archives has broadened the scope of library collections and expanded access to a more diverse user base. This technological shift enhances inclusivity and ensures that libraries remain relevant in a highly competitive global knowledge economy (Yarema, 2022).

Globally, libraries are increasingly leveraging websites, blogs, social media platforms, online forums, and multimedia channels such as YouTube and TikTok to reach and engage users. This innovative orientation reflects the demand for responsiveness, accessibility, and competitiveness in the digital age. In developing contexts, including Nigeria, academic libraries are similarly challenged to harness emerging technologies to improve service delivery and meet international standards. As Adeniran and Unuigboje (2018) observe, the concept of the virtual library

extends beyond automation and digitization to encompass a fully networked environment

The rapid advancement of wireless and digital technologies in the twenty-first century has further accelerated the demand for virtual information services. Users increasingly rely on seamless online platforms to retrieve information across national and international boundaries. Within this context, the virtual library represents a transformative model—one that can function in a largely paperless environment while retaining the essential attributes of a traditional library. Individuals equipped with internet-enabled devices can connect to library networks and access extensive information resources through intranets and global networks, irrespective of physical location (Adeniran & Unuigboje, 2018).

Importantly, the development of effective virtual library systems requires a service-oriented rather than purely technology-driven approach. A service-based architecture ensures the integration of digital resources with the human expertise involved in organizing, managing, and disseminating information. As noted by Lanke (as cited in Njoku & Governor, 2023), virtual library services constitute structured and coordinated efforts by professional librarians to connect users with information resources via electronic networks. These services may be delivered through diverse channels—including email, telephone, social media, and real-time virtual consultations—thereby meeting users' information needs within and beyond physical library spaces.

Consequently, the transition from a hybrid model toward a digital-first framework has become imperative for academic libraries seeking sustainable and effective information service delivery. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement, libraries that fail to establish robust online platforms risk diminished relevance. The enhancement of library services through well-designed virtual systems is therefore essential for ensuring continuous access, improved user satisfaction, and the realization of institutional educational goals.

Virtual Library Services

Virtual libraries, commonly known as digital or electronic libraries, are systematically organized collections of information resources stored in digital formats and accessed primarily through computer networks, especially the internet. Unlike conventional libraries that maintain physical collections, virtual libraries enable remote access to electronic books, scholarly journals, databases, multimedia materials, and institutional repositories (Arms, 2000; Cleveland, 1998). They combine information technology with traditional library services to improve the storage, organization, retrieval, and dissemination of information.

The emergence of virtual libraries is closely linked to rapid developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs), which have significantly reshaped the production, storage, and accessibility of knowledge. According to Arms (2000), digital libraries consist of organized digital information resources

supported by services that facilitate their management and access. Similarly, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2011) notes that digital libraries extend the core functions of traditional libraries into electronic environments, thereby promoting equitable access to information.

In the Nigerian context, virtual libraries play a vital role in addressing the scarcity of up-to-date academic materials in tertiary institutions. The Nigerian Virtual Library Project, established by the National Universities Commission (NUC), was introduced to provide students and researchers with access to international scholarly databases (Omekwu, 2006). Scholars such as Aina (2004) and Omekwu (2006) observe that virtual libraries enhance research output, bridge information gaps, and foster academic collaboration. Despite these advantages, several constraints—including inadequate funding, unreliable internet connectivity, unstable power supply, and insufficient ICT competencies—continue to limit their effective operation in many institutions (Aina, 2013).

Virtual libraries present numerous advantages, such as round-the-clock access, efficient use of space, faster information retrieval, long-term cost savings, and strong support for distance education. They also encourage global knowledge exchange and increase institutional visibility through open access platforms (Cleveland, 1998). However, challenges related to digital preservation, copyright regulation, cybersecurity threats, and rapid technological changes remain persistent concerns.

Virtual libraries constitute a significant advancement in library and information service delivery. For countries like Nigeria, maximizing their potential requires consistent funding, strengthened ICT infrastructure, supportive policies, and ongoing capacity building for both library professionals and users.

Forms of Virtual Library Services

Resource Discovery Services: Resource discovery services are online tools that enable users to locate both locally held and subscribed digital resources through a single search interface. They represent a modern evolution of traditional information retrieval systems and enhance access to expanding print and electronic collections (Pal, 2017).

Unlike older full-text systems, discovery platforms integrate functions such as user authentication, renewals, and reservations with advanced features like faceted navigation, citation display, academic recommendations, tagging, and full-text linking. These systems improve resource visibility, organization, and user experience by integrating metadata from publishers and connecting users directly to content providers.

Libraries now implement tools such as Next Generation Catalogues (NGC), federated search systems, and web-scale discovery services to enhance search efficiency. The NGC, supported by MARC records, enriches browsing, enables

subject-based access, and provides intuitive interfaces that surpass traditional catalog systems.

Virtual Reference Services: Virtual reference services deliver professional assistance to users through electronic communication without requiring physical presence in the library. These services operate via email, chat, instant messaging, video conferencing, VoIP, and social media platforms.

They extend reference support beyond the physical library and promote collaboration between librarians and users in online environments. Social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, and LinkedIn are increasingly used to improve communication, outreach, and service delivery.

In academic libraries, especially in Africa, social media enhances collaboration, broadens access, and supports large student populations. Virtual reference services allow librarians to respond to multiple users simultaneously, improve accessibility, and strengthen engagement within the digital information environment.

Access Service: Access services focus on delivering information to users after discovery. This includes providing digital resources through library websites and digitized collections. Digitization involves converting non-digital materials into electronic formats through processes such as scanning, metadata creation, indexing, and online uploading.

Digitization enhances preservation, broadens access to research outputs, and supports collaborative sharing of knowledge. It enables long-term access to institutional intellectual content and strengthens information dissemination.

Library websites serve as gateways to electronic journals, e-books, databases, and print collections. They facilitate remote access and function as central platforms for managing both physical and digital resources.

Instructional Services: Instructional services equip users with the skills needed to effectively locate, evaluate, and use information resources. Librarians collaborate with faculty to promote research competencies, information literacy, and critical thinking skills essential for academic success.

These services include synchronous and asynchronous instruction, online tutorials, course-specific sessions, and information literacy integration into curricula. The instructional role has expanded from teaching basic catalog use to developing higher-order skills such as evaluation, synthesis, and responsible information use (Wolff, Rod & Schonfeld, 2016).

Studies indicate that while librarians emphasize search strategies and resource use, greater attention is increasingly given to critical evaluation and research tracking (Zhang, et al, 2015). Self-paced online modules have proven effective in improving information literacy outcomes.

Professional standards such as those of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2016) emphasize equitable digital literacy instruction for distance learners, including accessible formats for users with disabilities. Best practices in tutorial design highlight clarity, interactivity, updated content, and

user-friendly web integration (Blevins, et al., 2014). Overall, instructional services enhance students' autonomy, research efficiency, and transferable skills needed for lifelong learning and professional development.

Implications of Virtual Library Services for Librarians' Digital Competencies

The provision and management of virtual library services significantly shape the digital competencies required of contemporary librarians. Electronic Resources Librarians bear primary responsibility for ensuring seamless access to digital resources. This role demands both theoretical understanding and practical expertise in the hardware, software, and structural systems that support electronic resource delivery, as well as insight into how these components interrelate.

Effective resource discovery systems must be designed with sensitivity to the limitations of novice users, leveraging observed search behaviors to improve search experiences (Marshall Breeding, cited in Roen, 2014). Analysis of user search patterns—such as the frequent use of stop words and excessively long search strings—reveals gaps in users' understanding of discovery tools. This underscores the need for researchers and students to invest more time in developing effective search strategies and precise keywords. Clear and transparent search interfaces that explicitly indicate what users are querying can further enhance user comprehension.

Consequently, librarians must prioritize user education, particularly in areas such as keyword formulation, research strategy development, and navigation of search interfaces. Information literacy instruction becomes central to this responsibility. Librarians should design targeted programmes that identify areas of user weakness and promote effective search habits.

For librarians lacking prior experience with discovery systems, mastering backend functionalities requires considerable time and effort. Vendors such as EBSCO provide training opportunities, including live and recorded sessions, to build technical proficiency. Professional knowledge exchange through conferences, workshops, and specialized discussion platforms—such as EBSCO EDS Partners—also supports skill development. Additionally, librarians must understand full-text linking mechanisms and indexing databases to troubleshoot access issues efficiently.

Digital competence further extends to accurate bibliographic metadata creation and synchronization. High-quality metadata enhances information retrieval and ensures effective resource discovery services. Librarians' digital expertise directly influences the design and improvement of discovery tools and approaches. Therefore, they must possess not only technical proficiency but also adaptability and confidence in managing digital resource software.

Virtual Reference Services and Librarians' Competencies

Virtual reference service competence encompasses the specialized knowledge, skills, and professional expertise required to deliver high-quality reference services in online environments. Research highlights the relational and communicative

dimensions of virtual reference interactions, emphasizing the critical role of librarian expertise in shaping service quality (Lynn, et al., 2016).

This competence is essential in addressing the needs of users who seek assistance remotely. Core skills for virtual reference librarians include advanced information retrieval techniques, research methodology, digital literacy, and strong customer service abilities. Research librarians are expected to support scholars in developing effective information retrieval strategies to enhance academic output. Essential research skills include structured analytical thinking, information management proficiency, effective communication, and knowledge dissemination capabilities (Susan Brown, Malcolm Wolski, & Joanna Richardson, 2015).

Within virtual reference environments, these competencies enable librarians to navigate digital systems effectively, provide accurate guidance, and utilize tools such as bibliometrics for research evaluation. Digital literacy, in particular, underpins the ability to operate email systems, social media platforms, databases, metadata tools, digitization technologies, and emerging information systems. These competencies ensure timely, efficient, and user-centered virtual services.

Ultimately, digital knowledge and technical proficiency are prerequisites for delivering effective access services. Librarians must therefore be equipped to manage digitization processes, web-based services, and digital archiving systems. The expansion of virtual library services makes continuous digital skill development not optional but essential for professional relevance and service excellence.

Conclusion

Virtual library services refer to the provision of information resources and support to users through both online and physical platforms, enabling them to access needed materials conveniently from their personal locations. These services leverage electronic networks to ensure seamless access to library collections and information resources.

In the present era of rapid technological advancement, libraries must strengthen and expand their virtual services to guarantee efficient and sustainable information delivery. However, this shift carries significant implications for the digital competencies of academic librarians. Continuous professional development and regular training are therefore essential to keep librarians updated with emerging technologies and evolving information management tools.

The acquisition of relevant digital knowledge and skills has become indispensable for sustaining effective information service delivery in Nigerian academic libraries. Furthermore, adequate technological infrastructure and facilities must be provided to support uninterrupted virtual information dissemination. Such provisions will not only enhance librarians' engagement in information delivery but also foster a proactive and positive attitude toward innovative service provision

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CHAPTER SIXTY

THE ROLE OF ICT TOOLS IN ENHANCING CLASSROOM TEACHING AND LEARNING AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION LECTURERS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Introduction

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed educational practices globally, shifting instruction from traditional, teacher-centered approaches to interactive, learner-focused environments (UNESCO, 2023). In Nigeria, national policies such as the National Policy on Education (2014) and the Nigerian National ICT in Education Policy (2020) emphasize the importance of ICT adoption across all levels of education to foster digital literacy and equip learners with essential 21st-century skills. For Business Education, which aims to develop practical competencies for careers in entrepreneurship, office management, and teaching in digital economies, ICT offers significant opportunities to enhance teaching and learning outcomes (Okoro, 2022).

Colleges of Education, as pivotal institutions for training future teachers, face challenges in ICT adoption, including limited infrastructure, unstable power supply, lecturers' low technical proficiency, and inadequate funding (Adeyemi & Olaleye, 2023). In Kogi State, the three Colleges of Education—Ankpa, Okene, and Technical Kabba—play a central role in preparing Business Education teachers. Understanding how lecturers perceive and utilize ICT tools is therefore crucial to evaluating the readiness of future educators for digitally driven business environments (Eze et al., 2023).

Despite policy recognition of ICT's importance, a gap remains between policy directives and actual classroom practice in Nigerian tertiary institutions (Ofori et al., 2024). Business Education, with its practical orientation in areas such as accounting, office technology, marketing, and entrepreneurship, particularly requires ICT to simulate real-world business scenarios; however, adoption remains inconsistent (Nwosu & Ibegbulam, 2023).

ICT tools, ranging from hardware such as computers, projectors, and interactive whiteboards to software including learning management systems, productivity applications, and simulation programme, facilitate the creation, management, and communication of information (UNESCO, 2023). Emerging

technologies, including cloud computing, mobile learning applications, and AI-driven tools, offer additional potential but are unevenly accessible across Nigerian institutions (Ofori et al., 2024).

Modern teaching now demands digital pedagogical competence alongside traditional expertise. Educators are expected not only to operate technology effectively but also to redesign instructional approaches to optimize learning outcomes (Adeyemi & Olaleye, 2023; Musa et al., 2024). ICT enables student-centered learning through collaborative platforms, personalized learning pathways, real-time feedback, and access to diverse resources. Digital teaching strategies such as flipped classrooms, project-based learning, online discussions, and interactive simulations are particularly relevant in Business Education (Nwosu & Ibegbulam, 2023).

Frameworks like Mishra and Koehler's (2006) TPACK model—integrating technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge—provide insights into the competencies needed for effective ICT integration. Similarly, Venkatesh et al.'s (2012) UTAUT2 model explains lecturers' intentions and actual ICT usage by considering performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, and hedonic motivation. Empirical evidence indicates that while Nigerian higher education lecturers recognize the value of ICT, institutional barriers often limit its effective implementation (Abdulhamid & Umar, 2023).

Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) refers to the broad spectrum of technological tools and resources used for the creation, storage, processing, transmission, and dissemination of information. It integrates both information technology (IT) and communication technologies to support the efficient management and exchange of data across various contexts. ICT encompasses hardware components such as computers, servers, tablets, smartphones, interactive whiteboards, and projectors, as well as software applications, databases, digital platforms, and network systems that enable connectivity and communication (Becta, 2008).

In the educational context, ICT represents more than just the physical tools; it embodies a transformative framework that reshapes how knowledge is accessed, delivered, and constructed. ICT tools in education include computers, multimedia projectors, educational software, virtual learning environments, learning management systems (LMS), internet-based platforms, digital libraries, and mobile technologies. These technologies enhance instructional delivery by promoting interactive learning, collaborative engagement, and access to diverse information resources beyond the traditional classroom setting (UNESCO, 2011).

Furthermore, ICT facilitates innovative pedagogical approaches such as blended learning, e-learning, flipped classrooms, and distance education. It enables

real-time communication between teachers and learners, supports individualized instruction, and provides opportunities for self-paced learning. Through digital simulations, multimedia presentations, and online assessment tools, ICT enhances learners' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Consequently, ICT is increasingly recognized as a vital component of contemporary educational systems and a catalyst for improving the quality, accessibility, and equity of education globally (UNESCO, 2011).

Classroom Teaching

Classroom teaching involves the systematic facilitation of learning, while learning itself reflects changes in knowledge, skills, or attitudes resulting from experience or instruction (Joyce, et al.,, 2015; Ormrod, 2016). ICT enhances these processes by supporting diverse instructional strategies, promoting learner engagement, and enabling timely feedback. In the realm of Business Education, which prepares students in areas such as accounting, commerce, entrepreneurship, office technology, and management (Obanya, 2010), ICT is particularly relevant given the increasingly digital nature of modern business environments.

Theoretical Framework

The integration of ICT in education is underpinned by several theoretical perspectives. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) posits that the adoption of technology is influenced by users' perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989). In educational settings, lecturers are more likely to incorporate ICT tools if they perceive them as enhancing instructional effectiveness. Complementing this, Constructivist Learning Theory emphasizes that learners construct knowledge actively through engagement with content (Piaget, 1954). ICT tools such as simulations, multimedia presentations, and collaborative platforms foster active learning, enabling students to achieve deeper understanding and practical skills.

Utilization of ICT Tools in Classroom Teaching

Business Education lecturers employ a variety of ICT tools, including computers and laptops, internet platforms, projectors, smartboards, educational software (e.g., accounting and business simulation programmes), and virtual learning environments such as Moodle and Google Classroom. These tools facilitate lectures, demonstrations, assignments, and assessments, making teaching more interactive and efficient (Adu, 2020).

The pedagogical benefits of ICT are multifaceted. Multimedia presentations, for example, enhance instructional delivery by appealing to different learning styles, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, thereby sustaining students' attention and understanding (Clark & Mayer, 2011). The internet provides access to current journals, case studies, and industry reports, ensuring that the Business Education curriculum remains relevant and up-to-date (Junaidu & Oyebade, 2017).

Additionally, collaborative platforms and discussion forums foster interaction between lecturers and students, as well as peer-to-peer learning (Downes, 2016). ICT also improves assessment practices, allowing for quizzes, online tests, and immediate feedback, which enhance both efficiency and learning outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 2018).

Challenges of ICT Integration

Despite these advantages, several obstacles hinder effective ICT integration in Colleges of Education in Kogi State. Infrastructural limitations, including irregular electricity supply, insufficient computer laboratories, and poor internet connectivity, constrain technology use (Oladipo & Ogunlade, 2014). Furthermore, some lecturers possess limited digital literacy, which reduces their ability to exploit available ICT tools fully (Agbatogun, 2017). Attitudinal barriers, such as resistance to change and reliance on traditional teaching methods, further impede adoption (Afolabi, 2019). Limited access to professional development opportunities exacerbates these challenges, leaving lecturers less competent in applying advanced ICT tools in their pedagogy (Bello & Ahmed, 2021).

Empirical Evidence on ICT Integration in Business Education

Empirical research consistently demonstrates that the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) significantly enhances the quality and effectiveness of Business Education. Studies conducted within the Nigerian context reveal that when lecturers deliberately incorporate digital tools such as multimedia presentations, learning management systems, simulation software, and online collaboration platforms into their teaching practices, student engagement and participation improve markedly. For instance, Musa and Alabi (2020) found that lecturers who effectively utilized ICT tools recorded increased student attentiveness, better comprehension of business concepts, and improved academic performance. Their findings suggest that ICT not only enriches instructional delivery but also promotes interactive and learner-centered pedagogical approaches.

In a related study, Olatunji et al. (2021) reported that lecturers' attitudes toward ICT play a pivotal role in determining the extent of its adoption. According to their findings, educators who possessed positive perceptions of technology and received institutional training were more likely to integrate ICT meaningfully into their instructional processes. The study further revealed that structured capacity-building initiatives significantly enhanced lecturers' digital competence and confidence. These results align with broader scholarship indicating that institutional culture, professional development opportunities, and leadership support are decisive factors in successful technology integration.

Collectively, these empirical insights affirm that while ICT holds immense potential to transform Business Education through enhanced access to information, innovative teaching strategies, and improved learning outcomes, its effectiveness

is contingent upon systemic and institutional support mechanisms. Without adequate infrastructure, training, and policy backing, the transformative promise of ICT may remain underutilized.

Strategies for Enhancing ICT Integration

To maximize the benefits of ICT in Business Education, deliberate and sustainable strategies must be implemented at institutional and governmental levels. First, continuous professional development is indispensable. Regular workshops, seminars, and certification programmes can empower lecturers with the technical skills and pedagogical knowledge required to effectively integrate emerging technologies into their teaching (Audu, 2020). Such initiatives should move beyond basic computer literacy to include advanced applications such as data analytics tools, virtual simulations, and digital entrepreneurship platforms relevant to Business Education.

Second, robust institutional and governmental support is essential to address infrastructural challenges. Oladipo and Ogunlade (2014) emphasized that the provision of reliable electricity supply, alternative energy solutions such as solar power systems, well-equipped computer laboratories, and affordable high-speed internet connectivity are foundational to effective ICT deployment. In contexts like Nigeria, where power instability and limited broadband access persist, strategic investment in sustainable infrastructure is critical for ensuring equitable access to digital learning resources.

Third, embedding ICT competencies within the Business Education curriculum ensures that technology integration is not peripheral but central to instructional design. Junaidu and Oyebade (2017) argued that curriculum frameworks should deliberately incorporate digital skills, e-commerce applications, accounting software training, and online communication tools to align graduates' competencies with contemporary workplace demands. Integrating ICT as both a pedagogical tool and a learning outcome fosters digital fluency among students and enhances their employability in a technology-driven economy.

Furthermore, the establishment of peer learning communities can significantly promote collaborative innovation. Through professional networks and communities of practice, lecturers can share best practices, exchange instructional resources, and collectively troubleshoot technological challenges. Such collaborative platforms cultivate a culture of continuous improvement, mutual mentorship, and collective digital literacy advancement.

In summary, strengthening ICT integration in Business Education requires a multifaceted approach encompassing professional capacity building, infrastructural investment, curriculum reform, and collaborative professional engagement. When these strategies are systematically implemented, ICT can serve as a transformative catalyst for improving instructional quality, learner engagement, and workforce preparedness.

Conclusion

ICT stands as a transformative force in modern education, offering considerable pedagogical advantages in the classroom. Among Business Education lecturers in Colleges of Education in Kogi State, ICT promotes engagement, supports diverse learning strategies, and prepares students for the digital demands of contemporary business environments. To realize its full potential, concerted efforts must address training needs, infrastructural deficiencies, and attitudinal challenges. In the 21st-century educational context, the integration of ICT is no longer optional—it is a fundamental imperative for effective teaching and learning.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

WOMEN IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION (WICE) AND THE BURDEN OF CURBING CHALLENGES TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIAN POLITICS

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Introduction

Women Empowerment is synonymous with girl-child education which cannot be overstressed (Efedi (2014). Women are fundamental in the growth and development of any society. The issue of women discrimination and low participation in politics and governance has been a major concern. Expectedly, this has been attracting a lot of reactions from scholars and groups around the globe, including Women in Colleges of Education (WICE).

The global calls aimed at bridging the gap created by the long-term discrimination against women and making them visible in politics through promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, in line with the Millennium Development Goal 3, have not yielded the desired results in Nigeria. This is evident given the steady decline we have consistently experienced in the number of women entrusted with appointive and elective positions in the country. This trend has continued to fester despite promises and assurances by successive administrations to adhere to global calls and treaties on the need to promote and increase women representation and participation in both politics and public life. Indeed, in Nigeria, the situation is a far cry from what is expected. For instance, we are yet to see the full implementation of the National Gender Policy that was formulated in 2006 to demand 35% involvement of women in politics and all governance processes in the country. Again, not even the recommended 30% of the Beijing Platform of Action and other similar treaties or recommendations have been honoured by successive Nigerian governments.

There is no denying the fact that, since 1999, we have not had more than 10% representation of women in governance processes. This is largely due to the lack of political will on the part of government as well as the patriarchal dominance of men in the corridors of power. In a country where almost 50% of the population are women, the abysmal number of women in political positions is definitely not representative of the reality, and it is also not indicative of modern-day democracy (Buba, 2001).

The truth be told, political leadership is not exclusively reserved for men, and it is within the right of the Nigerian woman to seek elective or appointive positions in any part of the country. Indeed, section 42(1) of the Constitution states that: "A Citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not by reason only that he is such a person be subjected to any form of discrimination." This further affirms that you can go to court to seek redress if, as a woman, your franchise is violated and that the constitution as a whole forbids discrimination on account of gender.

From the foregoing, the need to strategize, intensify efforts and objectively engage the Nigerian government, in the spirit of the global campaign for gender equality and women empowerment for increased female participation and representation in politics and other spheres of life in Nigeria, is long overdue.

Brief Historical Background of Women In Colleges of Education (WICE), Nigeria

Women in Colleges of Education, which is an association of academic staff and senior non-academic staff of Colleges of Education in Nigeria, is the creation of Dr. (Mrs) Jamila Shu'ara, a one-time Dean, School of Technical and Vocation Education at the Federal College of Education, Bichi, Kano State, and later became the Provost of the College.

Burdened about the paucity of women in Boardrooms and leadership positions in Colleges of Education across the country, Dr. Shu'ara thought it necessary to set up a body that will bring women together, give them a voice while promoting their interest and visibility. So, in 1993 and in line with her dream, she formed alliance with prominent women like Abby Dairo, Chief Programme Officer at National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), Jummai Almhadu and Aisha Akanbi, lecturers at Colleges of Education, Kano as well as Lucy Pandumy, FCE, Pankshia, Lucy A. Funberiatengbe, FCE, Obudu, Jara Turare FCE, Yola and Yetunde Akorede, a lecturer at Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo.

With courage and sheer conviction in what they represent, the group was able to appear before the then executive members of the committee of Federal Provosts chaired by Dr. Tyjani Ismail (the Provost, FCE Kano at the time). The presentation of the group got the approval and overwhelming support of the committee, and this led to the official launch of WICE in Kaduna in 1995 with more than twenty (20) Provosts of both Federal and State Colleges of Education in attendance and over twenty-five local chapters of WICE launched.

Today, WICE is waxing stronger and enjoys a wider coverage with over sixty-six (66) chapters across the country. It holds her international and national annual general conventions and conferences, regularly publishes academic journal(s) and is in partnership with the Ministry of Women Affairs, the National Council of Women Society and other related organizations.

The last National Conference took place in 2018 at FCE, Bichi, Kano State and the next has been scheduled to take place from October 6 – 11, 2019 at College of Education, Sagbama, Bayelsa State.

Objectives of WICE

The objectives of WICE include, but are not limited to:

1. provide a forum for interaction for consideration of women interests.
2. promote professional growth and excellence.
3. promote the welfare and socio-economic well-being of members with special emphasis on educational advancement.
4. promote women education in the country by direct action of WICE alone and in cooperation with other organizations with similar interests and requisite capacity.
5. awaken in women the awareness of their responsibilities to their communities and the nation at large.
6. actively engage in programmes such as journals, magazines and materials, disseminating their opinions and ideas as fully responsible members of the academic community and citizens of the nation.
7. foster cooperation with other national and international bodies with similar aims and programmes to those of WICE.
8. intercede whenever necessary through the NCCE and other appropriate bodies to avert incidences of gender related situation of dissatisfaction or mistrust in Colleges of Education (COE) and their host Communities.

Types of Membership

There are four (4) categories of membership namely:

1. **Ordinary Membership:** This category of membership is available to all female Academic and Senior Non-academic Staff of Colleges of Education.
2. **Associate Membership:** This category is available to members acting as individuals or group in tertiary institutions that are not COE's with interest.
3. **Life Membership:** This category of membership can be attained by length of service of at least twenty (20) years uninterrupted. It is also regarded as Honorary Membership.
4. **Roll Honour Membership:** This is a type of membership attained by conferment only due to outstanding performance in the Society.

Statistics of Women in Politics in Nigeria According to World Ranking

Table 1: Women In Nigerian Parliament

Word Ranking	House of Rep. Election	Seats	Women	%	Senate Election	Seats	Women	%
181	03.2015	360	20	5.6	03.2015	109	7	6.5
125	04.2011	360	24	6.8	04.2011	109	7	6.4

117	0.2007	360	25	7.0	04.2007	109	9	8.3
107	04.2003	360	17	4.9	04.2003	109	3	2.8
104	02.1999	360	12	3.4	02.1999	109	3	2.8

Challenges of Women in Politics in Nigeria

The place of women in nation building cannot be overstated, and their involvement in politics and governance is of strategic importance given its far-reaching benefits. Regrettably, women have been poorly represented in the Nigerian political space owing to varying degrees of challenges that have greatly repelled their participation over the years. Some of these challenges include:

1. Cultural and Religious Practices

Nigeria is a highly cultural and religious state with practices that place restrictions on women on issues like education, economy and politics among others. It is so serious that, in some parts of the country, women are hardly allowed to socialize or mingle freely with other members of the society, much less get involved in politics or otherwise ventures. These practices have kept most women uneducated, unexposed and largely vulnerable with low confidence and self-esteem.

2. Lack of Confidence and Low Self Esteem

The political space in Nigeria is highly dominated by men. The dominance is such that most women, including the few who are qualified and have what it takes to deliver, do not often display sufficient confidence or self-esteem required to attract the trust and support of others. Indeed, with the happenings over the years, most women have been forced to believe that they are not good enough and do not stand a chance in politics and governance.

3. Lack of Support

Given the way politics is played in Nigeria, it is largely considered as the exclusive reserve of men, and it is also widely regarded as a dirty and dangerous business. This is largely so, as most of the players, as we have seen over the years, would stop at nothing to achieve their ambitions whether it is in the interest of the people or not. For this reason, most women are warded-off and can hardly attract the kind of support required to succeed in the political sphere. To further buttress this point, in 2011, twenty males and one female (who ended up attracting just a vote), contested the office of the president. Obviously, other than herself, no other person voted for her. Also, a female presidential candidate, in the 2019 presidential election, withdrew from the race, ten days to the election citing betrayal, lack of support and other related concerns within her party.

4. Financial Limitations

It is a known fact that politics in Nigeria is very expensive and highly monetized. A good number of those who contested and came out victorious in elections are those who had funds to spray around or who had political

godfather(s) who are financially buoyant to provide the required financial backing. Furthermore, the cost at which nomination forms are sold in Nigeria is ridiculous and way beyond what most women can afford. And even with the concession recently introduced by some major political parties for women, it is still very expensive to seek elective positions in Nigeria due to the extremely high financial involvements. Of the truth, in a system like this where women are extremely poor, not empowered and largely dependent, it is certain that regardless of their population, their level of involvement and representation in politics and governance will be low.

5. *Societal Discrimination*

This is also one of the challenges confronting Nigerian women in politics. In Nigeria, women are often looked down upon and not considered good, tough and reliable enough to hold leadership positions both in politics and public life. In most cases, they are seen as rubber stamps who can hardly make decisions on their own, command respect, add value or even garner votes; in fact, it is largely believed that a woman's place is in the kitchen and the 'other room'. Discrimination also exists among women and family members, this to a large extent, underscores why the first and the only female presidential candidate who contested the 2011 presidential election did not attract any other vote besides her own vote (Buba, 2001).

Policy Way Forward

To address the structural and systemic barriers limiting women's participation in Nigerian politics, and to strengthen the advocacy and intervention role of Women in Colleges of Education (WICE), the following policy directions are proposed:

1. WICE should strengthen collaborations with gender-focused organizations, civil society groups, professional bodies, and relevant government agencies to coordinate advocacy efforts, pool resources, and sustain nationwide gender mainstreaming initiatives.
2. Structured mentorship frameworks should be established to connect aspiring female politicians with experienced women leaders in governance, thereby enhancing political exposure, confidence, and leadership competence.
3. Regular political education programmes, workshops, and community-based enlightenment campaigns should be organized to improve women's awareness of their constitutional rights, electoral processes, and opportunities for political engagement.
4. WICE and allied stakeholders should engage political parties to advocate for internal reforms, including reduced nomination fees for women, enforceable gender quotas, and affirmative action measures that promote women's candidacy.
5. Targeted economic empowerment policies, including access to grants, cooperative funding schemes, and campaign support funds, should be prioritized to address the financial constraints that discourage women from contesting elections.

6. Continuous leadership development programmes focusing on campaign strategy, public communication, policy formulation, negotiation, and media engagement should be institutionalized to prepare women for competitive political roles.
7. WICE chapters should intensify grassroots mobilization by identifying, mentoring, and supporting potential female leaders within host communities, thereby strengthening women's political presence from the local level upward.
8. Deliberate advocacy should be directed toward the full implementation of the National Gender Policy and the domestication of international gender equality commitments, with emphasis on legally enforceable participation benchmarks.
9. Strategic media engagement should be pursued to challenge negative stereotypes and project women as competent, credible, and effective political leaders.
10. Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be instituted to track progress in women's political participation, assess policy effectiveness, and support evidence-based reforms.

Conclusion

This paper has critically examined the persistent challenges confronting women's participation in Nigerian politics, situating the discussion within the broader context of gender inequality, democratic representation, and national development. Drawing attention to the historical and contemporary realities of women's marginalization in political and governance processes, the study underscores the paradox of a democratic system in which women constitute nearly half of the population yet remain grossly underrepresented in elective and appointive positions. The evidence presented clearly demonstrates that structural, cultural, economic, and institutional barriers continue to limit women's political visibility and influence in Nigeria.

Within this context, the role of Women in Colleges of Education (WICE) emerges as both strategic and indispensable. As an organized intellectual and professional platform, WICE possesses the capacity to mobilize, enlighten, and empower women through advocacy, mentorship, research dissemination, and strategic partnerships. The association's sustained engagements, national spread, and collaborative networks position it as a critical stakeholder in efforts to challenge entrenched patriarchal norms and to promote women's political consciousness and leadership preparedness. Beyond advocacy, WICE can serve as a catalyst for translating awareness into action by encouraging and supporting competent women to actively seek elective and appointive offices.

Ultimately, advancing women's participation in Nigerian politics should not be viewed as a concession granted by the state or by male-dominated political structures, but as a constitutional right and a democratic imperative. Meaningful progress will require deliberate political will, policy implementation, sustained civic education, and collective action by women themselves and supportive institutions.

When women organize, assert their rights, and strategically engage the political process, they do not merely advance gender equity; they strengthen democratic governance and contribute to more inclusive and responsive leadership. In this regard, empowering women politically is not only a matter of social justice, but a prerequisite for sustainable national development in Nigeria.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER-INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND IT'S IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN AGRO-ENGINEERING AND BIOTECHNOLOGY SECTORS OF DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Introduction

A large number of Nigerians work in agriculture, which remains an important factor in the country's economic growth and means of livelihood. Notwithstanding having rich soils and a variety of agro-ecological zones, Delta State's agricultural production is still hampered by problems like poor resource management, environmental degradation, and a lack of technological innovation (Chukwuji, 2013). In a bid to enhance ecological balance and food security, modern biotechnology advancements and sustainable agriculture practices (SAPs) have received more attention (Gurjar, 2025). In many agricultural organizations, gender-inclusive leadership is still dominated by men, and this hinders the potential contributions of women and gender-diverse professionals to sustainable agricultural growth even though it assures equitable participation, encourages innovation through diverse perspectives, and strengthens institutional capacity for sustainability-driven decision-making. This makes leadership an important factor in the successful adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, especially the degree of gender inclusion in leadership roles within the biotechnology and agricultural sectors. In addition to being a social justice issue, leadership inclusion is a strategic management issue that has an impact on stakeholder involvement, corporate culture, and the spread of innovation (Vikhanskiy et al., 2025). Therefore, it is essential for evidence-based policy and institutional reform in Delta State to comprehend how gender-inclusive leadership affects sustainable agricultural results in the biotechnology and agro-engineering sectors. This research study's primary goal is to investigate empirically how gender-inclusive leadership affects the uptake and efficacy of sustainable farming methods in Delta State, Nigeria's agro-engineering and biotechnology sectors.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the degree or level of gender inclusion in leadership in Delta State's biotechnology and agro-engineering industries.
2. To assess how the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices is impacted by leadership that is inclusive of all genders.
3. To determine the challenges hindering women from taking the lead and participating in sustainable agriculture projects.
4. To create strategic suggestions for enhancing gender-inclusive leadership in Delta State to increase sustainable agricultural growth.

Hypotheses

The following null (H_0) hypotheses were developed for empirical testing:

H_{01}: There is no significant correlation between gender-inclusive leadership and the implementation of sustainable agriculture practices in Delta State's biotechnology and agro-engineering sector.

H_{02}: Gender-inclusive leadership has little effect on innovation performance in Delta State's agricultural sector.

H_{03}: There is no significant difference between male and female leaders in Delta State, when it comes to promoting sustainable farming practices.

H_{04}: Delta State's adoption of sustainable farming practices is not significantly impacted by gender based barriers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Concept of Leadership and Gender-Inclusive Leadership

Leadership can be broadly defined as the capacity to influence, motivate, and guide individuals towards enhancing the effectiveness and success of an organization (Abdulwahed & Hasna, 2017). In recent years, leadership research has shifted its focus from personal traits to more inclusive and collaborative dimensions, emphasizing diversity, equity, and collective effort (Abson, 2021). Leadership that ensures equitable involvement of all genders in decision-making, resource distribution and policy execution is known as gender-inclusive leadership (Kuteesa et al., 2024). To counter gender bias in leadership roles, mentorship and access to opportunities, inclusive leaders value diversity as a driver of innovation and long-term success (Mba et al., 2025). Gender inclusion remains a vital element in driving innovation, enhancing productivity, and promoting sustainability within engineering and agriculture industries. Research indicates that when women hold leadership positions, organizations are more likely to give social justice, environmental protection, and long-term resilience a priority (Sahu & Kannoujia, 2025).

Sustainable Agricultural Practices (SAPs)

A system of production known as "sustainable agriculture" satisfies present-day demands for food and fiber without endangering the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own (Sharma & K.C., 2024). It includes conservation-focused activities, biotechnology advancements, eco-friendly technology adoption, and resource efficiency (Setty, 2025). Integrated pest and nutrient management; conservation tillage and soil fertility management; water conservation, and climate-smart technologies are examples of sustainable agricultural practices, or SAPs.
Innovations in biotechnology for bettering crops; recycling waste and renewable resources increasing production while reducing environmental degradation in Nigeria has required the use of biotechnology and engineering advancements into agricultural systems (Obembe et al., 2025). However, access to training, policy support, gender engagement, and leadership structure all have an impact on SAP adoption.

Gender and Leadership in Agricultural and Biotechnology Sectors

In Nigeria, engineering and agriculture have historically been male-dominated fields with little female involvement in decision-making (Olatundun et al., 2019). Due to sociocultural norms, unequal access to education, unequal property ownership, and discrimination in career progression, gender inequities still exist (FAO, 2019). Research has demonstrated that gender-balanced leadership teams encourage innovation driven by sustainability, improve problem-solving skills, and stimulate creativity (Mba et al., 2025). Stakeholder engagement and project sustainability are positively correlated with the presence of women in leadership roles in biotechnology and agricultural engineering firms (Ogunlela & Mukhtar, 2009).

Theoretical Review

Transformational Leadership Theory

Leaders who inspire and motivate followers to surpass expectations via vision, integrity, and empowerment are emphasized by transformational leadership theory (Dewi, 2024). Inclusive leaders share transformational qualities including equity, collaboration, and individualized care. In gender-diverse teams, transformational leadership enhances trust, inclusion and performance (Ince, 2022). This hypothesis supports the idea that under gender-inclusive leadership, creative, empowered, and driven employees enhance sustainable agricultural performance.

Social Role Theory

According to Social Role Theory, gender differences in leadership are mostly caused by culturally assigned duties and expectations (Nazrul, 2024). Women are often socialized into loving, cooperative roles, whereas men are perceived as aggressive and forceful leaders. However, these roles work together to produce synergistic leadership outcomes that improve organizational sustainability in

inclusive environments (Maithili et al., 2023). This argument explains the continued underrepresentation of women in prominent roles in agriculture as well as the necessity of deliberate inclusivity initiatives.

Sustainable Development Theory

Based on the Brundtland Report of 1987, this theory encourages development that meets the present needs without putting future generations in jeopardy (Dabija, 2021). In line with the principles of inclusive leadership and agricultural sustainability, it places a strong emphasis on equity, environmental care and participation. Gender inclusion ensures that both men and women contribute knowledge and ideas to the development of sustainable food productions (Das et al., 2023).

Empirical Review

Recent empirical evidence strongly affirms the positive link between gender-inclusive leadership and sustainability outcomes in biotechnology and agriculture. Fertő and Bojnec (2024) found that agricultural cooperatives with greater gender inclusion are more likely to adopt eco-friendly practices and achieve higher productivity. Likewise, Onwudiegwu (2023) reports that gender-diverse teams in Nigeria's biotechnology sector demonstrate a heightened dedication to sustainable practices and a great openness to innovation. Supporting this viewpoint, Gomori-Ruben and Reid (2023) highlighted that agricultural enterprises led by women tend to foster enhanced environmental responsibility and deeper community engagement. Abiona et al. (2023) identified a significant link between inclusive leadership and both employee satisfaction and the adoption of sustainable farming practices in South-West Nigeria. Likewise Enwa et al. (2024) demonstrated that when women actively participate in decision-making processes, agricultural extension services are strengthened and resilience to climate-related risks is improved in Delta and Edo State. Despite notable progress, institutional and cultural obstacles such as gender bias, limited access to resource, and underrepresentation in leadership, continue to hinder women's advancement in agriculture and technology, as emphasized by Igbekele and Ikuejewa (2025). Collectively, these findings suggest that while gender-inclusive leadership significantly promotes social equity, sustainability and innovation in agricultural development, its impact remains limited by persistent structural barriers. To unlock its potential, targeted policy measures, institutional restructuring and capacity-building efforts that prioritize gender inclusion in leadership and decision making are essential for driving lasting agricultural transformation in regions like Delta State.

Gaps in the Literature

There is little empirical research on the following topics, despite the fact that previous studies have examined gender and leadership generally:

1. The direct connection between gender-inclusive leadership and sustainable agricultural practices in the biotechnology and agro-engineering industries.
2. Quantitative proof from Delta State, in spite of its advantageous location as a significant center for agriculture and technology in southern Nigeria.
3. The processes by which sustainability, performance, and innovation results from inclusion.

   Therefore, by conducting an empirical analysis of the ways in which gender-inclusive leadership affects innovation outcomes and sustainable agriculture practices in Delta State, this study closes these gaps.

Methodology

Research Design

A mixed-methods research design was used in this study, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. Data from agricultural engineers, biotechnologists, and farm managers at some selected agricultural institutions and biotechnology firms in Delta State were gathered for the quantitative component using a descriptive survey approach. Key stakeholders, such as heads of agricultural cooperatives, extension agents, and Ministry of Agriculture policy actors, participated in semi-structured interviews as part of the qualitative component. This design was selected to capture the contextual experiences influencing leadership inclusivity in the research area as well as the quantifiable connections between gender-inclusive leadership and sustainable agriculture practices.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Delta State, one of the Niger Delta's most agriculturally productive regions. The state hosts a range of agro-engineering and biotechnology initiatives spearheaded by government institutions, research bodies, and private sector actors. Renowned for its divergent agricultural output, Delta State excels particularly in aquaculture, rice cultivation, oil palm production, and cassava farming. Its rich socioeconomic and ecological landscape provides a valuable context for exploring how inclusive leadership influences the adoption of sustainable and technologically advanced agricultural practices.

Population of the Study

The target population comprised professionals, practitioners, and stakeholders involved in sustainable agricultural and biotechnological initiatives within Delta State. This includes members of farmer associations and agricultural cooperatives; biotechnologists and researchers affiliated with agricultural research institutions; extension officers and farm managers working in government-led agricultural programs; agricultural engineers and technicians from both public and private sectors; as well as policy makers and administrative personnel from Delta State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Based on data from Delta State's cooperative societies, research facilities, and agricultural development

programs, the estimated population across these groupings was roughly 750 people (2024 agricultural census estimate).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 180 respondents was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations, applying a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

A multi-stage sampling approach was employed as follows:

1. ***Stratification (Stage One):*** Delta state was divided into three (3) senatorial districts Viz.: Delta North, Delta Central, and Delta South.
2. ***Purposive Selection (Stage Two):*** Key biotechnology hubs and agricultural zones within each district, including Asaba, Warri, Ugheli, and Agbor, were deliberately selected.
3. ***Random Sampling (Stage Three):*** Within each selected zone, respondents were randomly chosen using simple random sampling to ensure balance representation across gender and professional categories. Additionally, ten key informants comprising senior engineers, female leadership advocates, and directors of agricultural programs were purposefully selected for qualitative interviews.

Data Collection Instrument

Two primary instruments were utilized for data collection:

1. ***Structured questionnaire:*** Designed to capture information on sustainable agricultural practices, gender inclusion, leadership characteristics, and demographic details. The questionnaire was organized into four sections (A-D) and featured both close ended questions and Likert-scale items. A reliability pre-test yielded a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.82, indicating internal consistency.
2. ***Semi-structured Interview Guide:*** Employed to gather in-depth qualitative insights from key stakeholders regarding sustainability strategies, challenges to gender inclusion and prevailing leadership dynamics. Each interview between 30 and 45 minutes and was conducted either face-face or via virtual platforms.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection spanned along period of six weeks. Prior to its commencement, formal authorization was secured from relevant agricultural institutions and organizations. The researcher personally conducted the interviews, while trained field assistants were responsible for administering the questionnaires. Throughout the process, ethical standards were upheld, ensuring informed consent and the confidentiality of all participants.

Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were coded and analyzed using Version 26 of the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics including, mean, frequency, and percentage were employed to summarize demographic

characteristics and leadership patterns. To explore the relationship between gender-inclusive leadership and sustainable agricultural practices, inferential techniques such as multiple regression analysis and Pearson's correlation were applied. Independent t-test were conducted to assess gender-based difference in leadership impact. For the qualitative data, thematic content analysis was utilized to identify recurring themes, perspectives, and contextual factor influencing leadership sustainability and inclusivity.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

The content was validated through a review by three subject-matter experts specializing in gender studies, educational leadership and agricultural management. To refine ambiguous items, a pilot test was conducted with 20 participants who were not included in the main sample. Reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with subscale coefficients ranging from 0.78 to 0.84, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with established ethical research standards, ensuring data confidentiality, informed consent, participant anonymity, and voluntary involvement. Ethical clearance was obtained from Delta State Ministry of Agriculture Research and Ethics committee before the commencement of the fieldwork.

Expected Outcomes

The study aims to illustrate how gender-inclusive leadership significantly enhances the adoption and execution of sustainable agricultural practices by fostering innovation, collaboration, and strategic policy alignment. The resulting insights will provide evidence-based recommendations for promoting technology-driven sustainable agriculture in Delta State and other regions, while also advancing equity in leadership roles.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the respondents, encompassing variables such as gender, age range, educational qualifications, professional roles, and length of work experience.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=180)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	21–30 years	38	21
	31–40 years	67	37.2
	41–50	53	29.4
	>50	22	12.3
Sex	Male	108	60.0

	Female	72		40.0	
Marital Status	Single	80		44.4	
	Married		100		55.6
Educational Level	HND/B.Sc.		79		43.9
	M.Sc.		67		37.2
	Ph.D.		20		11.1
	Others	14		7.8	
Religion	Christian	112		62.2	
	Islam		68		37.8
Profession	Agricultural Engineer		64		35.6
	Biotechnologist	52		28.9	
	Extension Officer		34		18.9
	Policy/Admin Officer		30		16.6
Rank	Junior Staff		25		13.9
	Mid-level Staff	75		41.7	
	Senior Staff		80		44.4

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution reflects a balanced representation of both genders, although men continue to dominate leadership roles. The respondents' age range and educational qualifications reflect a professionally experienced cohort, lending credibility to their insights on leadership and sustainable agricultural practices.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 2: Estimated Level of Gender-Inclusive Leadership in the Sectors

Statement	Mean (x)		SD	Decision
The distribution of leadership roles is equal between the genders.	3.82		0.84	High
Women's opinions are taken into account when making decisions.	3.67	0.95	High	
Equal opportunities for all employees are supported by policies.	3.95	0.78	High	
There are equal possibilities for leadership training for both genders.	3.56		1.02	Moderate
Gender diversity is encouraged by organizational culture.	3.71	0.88	High	

Table two shows that although there are still gaps in training and empowerment programs, the aggregate mean of 3.74 shows a comparatively high degree of gender inclusion.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis on Gender Inclusive Leadership and Sustainable Agricultural Practices

Variables	r	p-value	Decision
Gender-Inclusive Leadership ↔ Sustainable Agricultural Practices	0.684	0.000	Significant

A statistically significant and strong positive correlation ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.05$) indicates that the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices is improved by more gender inclusion in leadership.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis Summary on Gender Inclusive Leadership and Sustainable Farming Practices

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error	F-value	Sig. (p)
Gender-Inclusive Leadership → Sustainable Agriculture	0.691	0.477	0.472	0.561	45.33	0.000

Coefficients Table

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p)	Decision
Leadership inclusivity	0.612	8.31	0.000	Significant
Innovation Culture	0.274	4.12	0.001	Significant
Gender Policy Support	0.191	3.02	0.003	Significant

About 47.7% of the variance in the adoption of sustainable farming practices can be explained by the regression model ($R^2 = 0.477$). Sustainability outcomes are significantly predicted by the independent variables of policy support, innovative culture, and inclusive leadership.

Table 5: Independent Samples t-Test for Gender Differences in Leadership impact

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
Male Leaders	108	3.84	0.71	2.74	0.007	Significant
Female Leaders	72	4.15	0.68			

Gender differences in leadership inclusion scores were examined using an independent samples t-test. The leadership inclusion index revealed that female leaders scored substantially higher ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.68$) than male leaders ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.71$), $t(178) = 2.74$, $p = 0.007$. Women-led teams tend to place greater emphasis on equitable participation, collaborative effort, and environmental responsibility than their men-led counterparts.

Discussion of the Findings

The study's findings highlight the influence of gender-inclusive leadership on the uptake of sustainable agricultural practices within Delta State's biotechnology and agro-engineering sectors. Overall, the results underscore that inclusive leadership approaches, a culture of innovation, and gender-responsive policies play a vital role in fostering equitable and environmentally sustainable organizational outcomes. The demographic data indicates a workforce characterized by both professional diversity and substantial experience, with men still occupying most leadership roles. Nonetheless, the relatively high representation of women (40%) points to a gradual shift toward gender balance within the industry. Additionally, the respondents' strong educational background reflects a well-equipped workforce with the managerial and technical expertise needed to actively support sustainable agricultural transformation.

Findings on the extent of gender-inclusive leadership (**mean = 3.74**) indicate that most organizations within Delta State's biotechnology and agro-engineering sectors recognize the importance of gender equity. A majority of respondents agreed that institutional policies, decision-making structures, leadership roles support inclusive practices. However, the comparatively lower score for equality in leadership training (**mean = 3.56**) underscores a persistent need for targeted mentorship and empowerment programs for women. This aligns with Wahyuni et al. (2023), who emphasize that achieving gender parity in agricultural leadership hinges on strengthening institutional capacity.

Correlation and regression analyses ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.05$; $R^2 = 0.477$) reveal that gender-inclusive leadership is a significant predictor of the adoption of sustainable farming practices. This indicates that organizations are more inclined to implement environmentally friendly technologies and management approaches when both men and women are actively engaged in decision-making processes. These findings align with recent studies, such as Ozor et al. (2025), which highlight the role of inclusive leadership in driving innovation diffusion, collaborative problem-solving, and improved sustainability outcomes in agricultural systems. Similarly, empirical evidence from Awoke et al. (2025) supports the positive influence of gender dynamics on the uptake of climate-smart and sustainable agricultural practices across diverse farming communities. Furthermore, the regression model identified gender policy support and a culture of innovation as key predictors of sustainability, underscoring the importance of institutional frameworks and organizational culture. These insights resonate with Transformational Leadership Theory, which emphasizes that empowerment, inclusivity, and a shared vision are essential for a long-term organizational resilience and success.

An independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant gender differences in leadership inclusion scores ($t(178) = 2.74$, $p = 0.007$). Female leaders

(M = 4.15, SD = 0.68) demonstrated a stronger commitment to inclusive and sustainable leadership compared to their male counterparts

(M = 3.84, SD = 0.71). This suggests that teams led by women are more inclined to prioritize equity, collaboration, and environmental stewardship. These findings reinforce the importance of increasing female representation in technical and managerial positions, aligning with previous research that links women's leadership with greater community engagement and ethical decision-making.

Despite promising indicators, the study uncovered persistent gender disparities in leadership participation. Women remain underrepresented in senior roles, largely due to enduring institutional and socio-cultural barriers. To overcome these challenges, targeted legislative reforms, structured mentorship initiatives, awareness campaigns promoting diversity and equal access to leadership positions are essential.

Conclusion

Empirical evidence highlights the significant impact of gender-inclusive leadership on the adoption and advancement of sustainable agricultural practices within Delta State's biotechnology and agro-engineering sectors. The results emphasize the critical need for policies that promote equitable representation in innovation systems, implement gender-responsive training programs, and established institutional structures that actively support women's participation in leadership roles.

Recommendations

Based on the study's conclusions and discussion on gender-inclusive leadership and sustainable agricultural practices within Delta State's biotechnology and agro-engineering sectors, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Organizations should put in place explicit gender policies that encourage equitable participation and accountability in order to bolster gender-inclusive leadership and sustainability in Delta State's biotechnology and agro-engineering industries.
2. Programs for mentoring and leadership development should be increased in order to prepare women for technical and managerial positions.
3. Organizations need to foster inclusive workplace environment that emphasize diversity, cooperation, and respect.
4. Government organizations should encourage public-private collaborations that put inclusive innovation first and integrate gender equity into agricultural and technology policies.
5. Awareness and advocacy efforts should address sociocultural barriers preventing women from participating in leadership roles, regular gender audits should be carried out to evaluate progress and direct adjustments. Enhancing these policies will boost creativity, advance equity, and guarantee the industry's long-term viability.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ENHANCING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a growing public health and human rights concern across Nigeria and the African continent at large. It encompasses any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will and based on socially ascribed gender differences, including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse. Despite significant progress in gender equality advocacy, GBV remains pervasive in many Nigerian communities, cutting across social, cultural, and economic boundaries (Adejumo & Omololu, 2022). The persistence of GBV reflects deep-rooted patriarchal norms, limited access to justice, weak law enforcement, and inadequate community awareness of women's reproductive rights.

Reproductive health challenges arising from GBV have been widely documented. Survivors often experience serious short- and long-term health consequences such as unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/AIDS), infertility, and psychological trauma. Studies have revealed that these outcomes are particularly severe in rural and semi-urban areas where access to healthcare services is limited, and stigma discourages victims from seeking support (Ogedegbe Nwankwo, & Akpata, 2025; Okafor & Eze, 2023). Furthermore, inadequate sexual and reproductive health education perpetuates ignorance and tolerance of harmful cultural practices such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, and marital rape.

Recent studies highlight how crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic have intensified GBV in Nigerian households. Lockdowns and economic hardship increased exposure to intimate partner violence while limiting survivors' access to help and health facilities (Ibrahim Nwankwo, & Akpata, 2022). Similarly, adolescent girls were disproportionately affected, with heightened risks of sexual exploitation and unplanned pregnancies (Ugwu Ezeani, & Okafor, 2023). The intersection of GBV with reproductive health thus reflects a broader challenge of inequality, where social norms, poverty, and institutional failures reinforce vulnerability among women and girls.

Health education is essential in addressing these interlinked challenges. It provides individuals with accurate knowledge, positive attitudes, and practical skills to make informed health decisions while promoting gender equity and behavioral change. Community-based health education programs can empower women, sensitize men, and encourage public dialogue against gender stereotypes that sustain violence (Eze & Okoye, 2021). Integrating GBV prevention and reproductive health education into community and school curricula is, therefore, critical to sustainable public health outcomes.

In Nigeria, governmental and non-governmental organizations such as the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, UNFPA, and civil society groups have made notable strides in awareness creation, healthcare worker training, and community mobilization. However, these interventions face challenges such as inadequate funding, cultural resistance, and weak policy implementation (UNFPA, 2024). To bridge the gap between awareness and action, there is a growing need to assess how effectively health education can promote positive attitudes toward gender equality, reduce GBV prevalence, and improve reproductive health outcomes in Nigerian communities.

This chapter therefore examines the role of gender-based violence as a determinant of reproductive health challenges and emphasizes the significance of community health education in mitigating its effects. Understanding this relationship is vital for policy formulation, advocacy, and the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3 and 5 ensuring good health and well-being and achieving gender equality, respectively.

Concept of Gender-Based Violence

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) refers to any act of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm directed at an individual based on socially constructed gender roles. The United Nations defines GBV as "any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will that is rooted in gender inequality and power imbalances" (UNFPA, 2024). GBV manifests in various forms such as rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, and emotional abuse.

In Nigeria, GBV is fueled by patriarchal traditions, economic dependency, and cultural norms that legitimize male dominance over women. Despite constitutional protections and ratification of international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the implementation of laws protecting women remains weak (Adewumi & Kolawole, 2021). According to the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP, 2023), thousands of women and girls experience GBV annually, but underreporting remains widespread due to fear of stigma and lack of trust in law enforcement.

The persistence of GBV demonstrates that the problem is not only legal but also deeply rooted in social structures. Therefore, combating it requires a holistic approach that integrates education, empowerment, and community transformation (Eze & Okoye, 2021).

Reproductive Health Challenges in Nigeria

Reproductive health in Nigeria continues to face numerous challenges that hinder the attainment of optimal well-being for individuals, particularly women and adolescents. Despite national and international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Reproductive Health Policy, progress remains uneven due to socioeconomic, cultural, and systemic barriers (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022).

Maternal Mortality and Morbidity

Nigeria has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2024), approximately 512 maternal deaths occur per 100,000 live births, largely due to preventable causes such as hemorrhage, infection, and hypertensive disorders during pregnancy. Poor access to skilled birth attendants, inadequate emergency obstetric care, and weak referral systems exacerbate this situation. In many rural areas, women deliver at home without professional assistance, increasing the risk of complications and death (Okafor & Eze, 2023).

Limited Access to Family Planning Services

Access to family planning services remains a major reproductive health challenge in Nigeria. Many women of reproductive age lack information or access to modern contraceptives due to cultural, religious, and economic barriers. The unmet need for family planning contributes to high rates of unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and rapid population growth (BMC Public Health, 2025). Moreover, myths and misconceptions surrounding contraceptive use persist, deterring women from adopting birth control measures (Adewumi & Kolawole, 2021).

Unsafe Abortions

Unsafe abortion is a critical concern, as restrictive abortion laws drive many women to seek clandestine and unsafe procedures. A report by BMC Public Health (2025) revealed that unsafe abortions account for a significant proportion of maternal deaths in urban and rural areas alike. These procedures often lead to severe complications such as hemorrhage, sepsis, and infertility. Strengthening reproductive rights and access to post-abortion care remains a pressing need.

Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Health

Gender-based violence (GBV) is both a human rights and reproductive health crisis in Nigeria. Survivors of physical and sexual violence frequently experience unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and

psychological trauma (Adejumo & Omololu, 2022). Harmful cultural practices such as early and forced marriages further expose girls to reproductive health risks, including obstructed labor and fistula (Ogedegbe et al., 2025). Health education and empowerment initiatives are essential to challenge these norms and protect women's health rights.

Adolescent Reproductive Health Issues

Adolescents face unique reproductive health challenges stemming from inadequate sexuality education, peer pressure, and limited access to youth-friendly health services. Teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and sexually transmitted infections remain prevalent among young people (Ugwu, Okon, & Adetunji, 2023). Many adolescents lack accurate information about their sexual and reproductive rights, which increases their vulnerability to exploitation and poor health outcomes.

Poor Reproductive Health Infrastructure

Nigeria's health system suffers from inadequate infrastructure, shortages of trained personnel, and insufficient funding. Many primary health care centers lack essential reproductive health commodities and skilled providers. This situation is worsened by unequal distribution of resources between urban and rural areas, making reproductive health services inaccessible to marginalized populations (Ibrahim, Yusuf, & Olatunji, 2022).

Socio-Cultural and Religious Barriers

Deep-rooted cultural beliefs and religious doctrines often influence reproductive health behaviors. In some communities, discussing sexual or reproductive issues is considered taboo, thereby limiting open communication and awareness (Eze & Okoye, 2021). Additionally, patriarchal norms restrict women's autonomy over reproductive decisions, leaving men as the primary decision-makers regarding family size and contraception

Reproductive health challenges in Nigeria are multifaceted, influenced by social, economic, cultural, and institutional factors. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that integrates health education, policy reform, gender equality, and community engagement. Strengthening reproductive health systems, expanding access to family planning, and empowering individuals especially women and adolescents are vital for achieving sustainable reproductive health outcomes and fulfilling the SDGs in Nigeria.

Forms and Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria

GBV occurs in diverse forms, each with unique consequences for victims. Physical violence includes battering, assault, and homicide, while sexual violence covers rape, sexual coercion, and harassment. Psychological abuse involves intimidation, humiliation, and verbal abuse, whereas economic violence restricts access to financial resources or employment (Ogedegbe et al., 2025).

Reports from the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs show that over 30,000 cases of GBV were documented in Nigeria between 2020 and 2024, with many more unreported (UNFPA, 2024). The COVID-19 lockdown period witnessed a surge in domestic and intimate partner violence across several states (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Women in rural and semi-urban areas are particularly vulnerable due to poor literacy, poverty, and limited access to social services.

In addition, cultural practices such as early marriage and FGM remain prevalent in some regions, exposing women to long-term reproductive complications. These statistics underscore the need for gender-responsive health education that challenges harmful cultural norms and encourages community-level prevention and support systems.

Concept of Reproductive Health

Reproductive health, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and its functions. It implies that individuals have the right to a safe sexual life, access to health services, and the ability to decide freely and responsibly on reproductive matters.

In Nigeria, reproductive health challenges persist despite numerous policy frameworks such as the National Reproductive Health Policy and Strategy (2021). Women in rural areas often lack access to antenatal care, family planning, and post-natal services. These inequalities are intensified by GBV, which limits women's autonomy and decision-making power in sexual and reproductive matters (Okafor & Eze, 2023).

Studies by Ugwu et al. (2023) and Ogedegbe et al. (2025) reveal that survivors of sexual violence frequently suffer from sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancies, and emotional trauma. Moreover, adolescent girls affected by sexual exploitation face stigma that restricts their access to healthcare and education.

Relationship Between Gender-Based Violence and Reproductive Health Challenges

The intersection of GBV and reproductive health is well established in research. Gender-based violence undermines women's control over their bodies, compromises their access to health services, and increases the risk of adverse reproductive outcomes. Sexual assault and coercive sex can lead to unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, infertility, and the transmission of HIV/AIDS (Adejumo & Omololu, 2022). Emotional abuse and intimidation can also discourage women from seeking prenatal or postnatal care.

In Nigerian communities, patriarchal dominance often grants men decision-making power over women's reproductive choices, thereby reducing women's autonomy in matters such as family planning and contraceptive use (Okafor & Eze, 2023). Furthermore, societal silence around sexual violence normalizes abuse and perpetuates a culture of impunity.

Empirical evidence indicates that communities with low levels of health literacy and gender sensitivity report higher incidences of GBV and poorer reproductive health outcomes (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Conversely, when women and men are empowered through education and social mobilization, reproductive health indices improve significantly.

The Role of Health Education in Preventing Gender-Based Violence

Health education serves as a vital instrument for preventing GBV and promoting reproductive health. It involves organized learning experiences that improve knowledge, influence attitudes, and encourage behavior change toward better health practices. Health education not only provides information about rights and available services but also challenges harmful gender norms and empowers individuals to take action against violence (Eze & Okoye, 2021).

Community-based health education programs can increase awareness about GBV, support victims, and engage men as allies in prevention efforts. For instance, programs implemented by UNFPA (2024) in Benue and Bauchi States trained health workers and community volunteers to identify and manage cases of sexual violence while promoting reproductive health services. These interventions demonstrate that sustainable progress depends on continuous education, community participation, and multi-sectoral collaboration.

At the school and community levels, integrating GBV awareness into health curricula helps young people develop respect for gender equality and understand the consequences of violence. Health education also enhances the capacity of healthcare providers to deliver gender-sensitive and trauma-informed care to survivors (Adewumi & Kolawole, 2021).

Summary

The literature reviewed indicates that gender-based violence remains a persistent and multifaceted problem in Nigerian communities. It contributes significantly to reproductive health challenges such as STIs, unwanted pregnancies, and psychological distress. Although several policy and advocacy efforts exist, the effectiveness of these interventions is limited by socio-cultural constraints, poor awareness, and insufficient implementation mechanisms.

Health education stands out as a powerful, preventive, and transformative tool that can address these challenges by promoting knowledge, changing attitudes, and encouraging equitable relationships. There is, however, a need for more community-driven, gender-sensitive, and education-based strategies to sustainably reduce GBV and improve reproductive health outcomes across Nigeria.

Conclusion

Gender-based violence in Nigerian communities is both a violation of human rights and a reproductive health crisis. Addressing it requires more than legal frameworks it calls for sustained investment in education, advocacy, and empowerment. Health education serves as a transformative tool for reshaping

mindsets, promoting gender equality, and enabling individuals to make informed choices about their health and well-being.

This chapter contributes to ongoing scholarly and policy discussions by situating GBV within the broader framework of reproductive health and sustainable development. It advocates a multidisciplinary approach that integrates advocacy, research, and policy reform to foster inclusive, gender-sensitive, and health-promoting societies in Nigeria and beyond.

Recommendations

1. The Federal and State Ministries of Education should incorporate comprehensive gender and reproductive health education into school and adult literacy curricula. Early exposure to gender equality principles and sexual health knowledge can help young people challenge stereotypes and make informed decisions about their well-being.
2. Community health educators, civil society organizations, and faith-based groups should collaborate to design and implement culturally sensitive awareness campaigns. These programs should focus on dismantling harmful traditional beliefs that tolerate violence and promote mutual respect between men and women.
3. Regular training should be provided for healthcare providers, teachers, social workers, and law enforcement officers to enhance their knowledge of GBV prevention, survivor support, and referral procedures. This will improve early identification of cases and ensure compassionate, professional responses to survivors.
4. The Nigerian government should strengthen enforcement of existing laws against gender-based violence, such as the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP). Adequate funding, monitoring, and evaluation frameworks should be established to ensure that policies are effectively translated into action.
5. Economic vulnerability is a major factor increasing women's exposure to violence. Empowerment initiatives such as vocational training, access to microcredit, and entrepreneurship programs should be expanded by the Government to help women gain financial independence and decision-making power within households.
6. The mass media and digital platforms should be strategically used to promote public awareness, report GBV cases, and challenge gender stereotypes. Social media campaigns, radio programs, and community theatre can serve as powerful tools for behavioral change and social transformation.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

INITIATIVES IN LIBRARY AUTOMATION IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Libraries have traditionally been considered repositories of knowledge, providing access to information resources in a variety of formats. However, with the rapid advancement of technology, libraries have had to adapt to the changing needs and expectations of their users. Library automation, which refers to the use of computer technology to streamline library processes or the process of using technology to perform library functions such as cataloging, circulation, acquisition, and electronic resources management, has become an essential tool for libraries looking to enhance their services and stay relevant in the digital age.

Automation has revolutionized library services by enhancing accessibility, efficiency, and resource management. In Nigeria, academic libraries are increasingly turning to automation to improve their services and meet the growing demands of their users. This paper aims to explore the initiatives in library automation within academic libraries in Nigeria, focusing on the benefits, challenges, and impact of automation on library operations.

Library automation has become a global trend, with libraries worldwide adopting various technologies to modernize their services. In Nigeria, academic libraries have also recognized the need for automation to keep up with the evolving information landscape and enhance user satisfaction. Several studies have examined the benefits of library automation, including improved access to information, streamlined workflows, enhanced user experience, and cost savings. However, the implementation of automation in academic libraries in Nigeria is not without its challenges, such as inadequate funding, lack of technical expertise, and resistance to change. Library automation has become a global trend, with libraries worldwide adopting various technologies to modernize their services.

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in Nigeria is not without its challenges, such as inadequate funding, lack of technical expertise, and resistance to change. In Nigeria, academic libraries are increasingly implementing automation initiatives to improve access to resources, streamline workflows, and enhance user experiences.

Current State of Library Automation in Nigeria:

Despite the challenges, several initiatives have been implemented in academic libraries in Nigeria to automate their services. The National Universities Commission (NUC) has played a pivotal role in promoting library automation through its accreditation guidelines, which emphasize the importance of digital resources and electronic services. Many academic libraries in Nigeria have adopted library management systems, electronic databases, and digital repositories to enhance their services and support research and learning activities. Some libraries have also implemented initiatives such as digitization projects, open access repositories, and online cataloging to improve access to information.

Key Players and Strategies in Library Automation:

Several key players are involved in promoting library automation in academic libraries in Nigeria, including government agencies, library consortia, universities, and international organizations. The Nigerian Library Association (NLA) and the Committee of University Librarians in Nigerian Universities (CULNU) have also been instrumental in advocating for the adoption of library automation in academic libraries. To ensure the successful implementation of automation initiatives, libraries have adopted various strategies, such as staff training, collaboration with IT professionals, and the development of digital literacy programs for users.

Initiatives in Library Automation in Nigerian Academic Libraries:

There are several key initiatives that academic libraries in Nigeria have undertaken to automate their operations and improve services for users. These initiatives encompass a wide range of technologies and strategies, each designed to address specific needs and challenges in library management. This section will discuss some of the notable initiatives in library automation in Nigerian academic libraries, highlighting their benefits, challenges, and implications for the future.

Integrated Library Management Systems:

One of the most common and impactful automation initiatives in Nigerian academic libraries is the implementation of integrated library management systems (ILMS). ILMSs are software platforms that centralize and automate various library processes, including cataloging, circulation, acquisitions, and electronic resource management. By leveraging ILMSs, libraries can streamline workflows, improve access to resources, and enhance user experiences.

Several academic libraries in Nigeria have adopted ILMSs to modernize their operations and provide better services to users. For example, the University of Ibadan Library recently implemented an ILMS to improve cataloging efficiency,

streamline circulation processes, and enhance resource discovery for users (Oyelude et al., 2016). The system enables librarians to catalogue and classify materials more quickly and accurately, reducing the time and effort required to make resources available to users.

Similarly, the University of Lagos Library implemented an ILMS to automate circulation processes and improve access to electronic resources for students and faculty members (Abiye & Bakpo, 2017). The system allows users to search for and borrow materials online, renew items, and access digital resources from any location, enhancing the library's services and ensuring that users have timely access to information.

While ILMSs offer numerous benefits, such as improved efficiency and user satisfaction, they also present challenges, including the cost of implementation, staff training, and data migration. Okieimen and Nwalo (2018) highlighted the need for sustained investment in technology and staff development to ensure the success of ILMS implementations in Nigerian academic libraries. Additionally, Adeloye and Abe (2015) emphasised the importance of stakeholder engagement and communication in overcoming resistance to change and promoting a culture of innovation in libraries.

Digitization Initiatives:

Another key initiative in library automation in Nigerian academic libraries is digitization, which involves converting physical materials, such as books, manuscripts, and photographs, into digital formats for preservation and access. Digitization initiatives enable libraries to provide users with online access to rare and valuable materials, enhance resource discovery, and preserve cultural heritage.

Several academic libraries in Nigeria have undertaken digitization projects to digitize their collections and make them accessible to a wider audience. For example, the Ahmadu Bello University Library digitised rare manuscripts and photographs from its archives to preserve fragile materials and provide online access to researchers and students (Igwe et al., 2019). The digitization project has enabled the library to showcase its unique holdings, attract new users, and contribute to the preservation of Nigeria's cultural heritage.

Similarly, the Obafemi Awolowo University Library digitized its special collections, including rare books, maps, and photographs, to make them accessible to researchers and students (Aina, 2014). The digitisation project has facilitated access to valuable materials that were previously inaccessible, enabling users to explore and engage with the library's rich holdings.

While digitisation initiatives offer many benefits, including preservation, access, and discovery, they also present challenges, such as the cost of equipment and software, copyright issues, and metadata management. Adigun et al. (2018) highlighted the need for careful planning and coordination in digitization projects to ensure that resources are allocated effectively and that project goals are achieved.

Additionally, Igwe et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of staff training and capacity building to support digitization initiatives and ensure their sustainability.

Open Access Initiatives:

In addition to integrated library management systems and digitization projects, open access initiatives represent another key automation initiative in Nigerian academic libraries. Open access refers to the unrestricted online availability of scholarly research articles, enabling researchers, students, and the public to access and use research findings without barriers.

Several academic libraries in Nigeria have adopted open access initiatives to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration among researchers. For example, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Library implemented an institutional repository to provide free access to faculty research outputs and dissertations, increasing the visibility and impact of the university's research (Oyelude et al., 2016). The repository enables researchers to showcase their work, disseminate findings, and engage with a global audience.

Similarly, the Covenant University Library established an open-access journal publishing platform to support scholarly communication and knowledge dissemination among faculty and students (Aina, 2014). The platform allows researchers to publish and access peer-reviewed articles in open access journals, promoting transparency, collaboration, and sharing of research findings.

Although open access initiatives offer numerous benefits, such as increased visibility, impact, and collaboration, they also present challenges, including funding, copyright issues, and sustainability. Adeloye and Abe (2015) highlighted the need for institutional support and infrastructure to ensure the success of open access initiatives in Nigerian academic libraries. Additionally, Aina (2014) emphasized the importance of advocacy and outreach to promote open access and raise awareness among researchers about the benefits of sharing their work openly.

Self-Service Kiosks:

Self-Service kiosks are interactive machines that allow library patrons to check out, renew, and return materials without the assistance of a librarian. The kiosks are equipped with barcode scanners. Receipt printers and a touch screen to facilitate easy and convenient transactions.

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) System:

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) System technology is widely used in academic libraries for inventory management, security control, and self-check out processes. RFID system consists of RFID tags attached to library materials, RFID readers installed at the various locations, and a library management software interface.

Impact of Library Automation:

The impact of library automation on academic libraries in Nigeria has been significant, with libraries experiencing improved efficiency, enhanced user satisfaction, and increased access to electronic resources. Automation has also facilitated the integration of digital tools and resources into library services, making it easier for users to search, access, and retrieve information. However, the full potential of library automation in Nigeria has yet to be realised, as libraries continue to face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and a lack of digital skills among staff and users.

Future Prospects:

As technology continues to advance, the future of library automation in Nigerian academic libraries looks promising, with new opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and impact. Several trends are shaping the future of library automation, including the adoption of cloud-based technologies, the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning, and the development of open standards and interoperability frameworks.

Cloud-based technologies offer academic libraries in Nigeria the opportunity to access scalable and efficient solutions for managing their resources and services. By leveraging cloud-based platforms, libraries can reduce costs, improve flexibility, and enhance collaboration with other institutions. Oyelude et al. (2016) discussed the advantages of cloud-based library systems in enhancing resource discovery, enabling remote access, and facilitating collaboration among libraries.

Artificial intelligence and machine learning present new possibilities for automating library processes and improving user experiences. By incorporating AI-driven solutions, academic libraries can enhance resource discovery, personalize services, and optimize workflows. Adeloye and Abe (2015) highlighted the potential of AI in enhancing library services and enabling librarians to focus on higher-value tasks, such as user engagement and research support.

Open standards and interoperability frameworks are essential for ensuring that automation initiatives in Nigerian academic libraries are sustainable and scalable. By adopting open standards, libraries can ensure that their systems are interoperable, compatible with other platforms, and adaptable to new technologies. Aina (2014) emphasized the importance of open standards in promoting collaboration, innovation, and information sharing among libraries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, initiatives in library automation are playing a crucial role in transforming academic libraries in Nigeria, enabling them to provide better services, improve access to resources, and enhance user experiences. Through integrated library management systems, digitization projects, open access initiatives, and other automation initiatives, Nigerian academic libraries are harnessing technology to modernize their operations and meet the changing needs and expectations of their users.

While there are numerous benefits to be gained from library automation, challenges remain, including limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and resistance to change. To ensure the success of automation initiatives in Nigerian academic libraries, sustained investment in technology, staff training, and stakeholder engagement is essential.

Looking ahead, the future of library automation in Nigerian academic libraries looks promising, with new opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and impact. By embracing cloud-based technologies, artificial intelligence, and open standards, libraries can continue to leverage technology to enhance their services, streamline workflows, and support teaching, learning, and research in academic institutions.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

FINE AND APPLIED ARTS AS A STRATEGIC PLATFORM FOR ADDRESSING INSECURITY THROUGH JOB CREATION IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Some decades ago in Nigeria, higher institutions graduates were sure of securing one form of paid job or the other. At that time, employers consulted institutions of higher learning to look for well-trained graduates to boost their work-force and enhance their productivity as an establishment or company. This is by placing adverts in different Departments, Schools and Faculties for various vacant positions.

But today, the story is quite distinct owing to the various factors that had worked against the development and prosperity of the Nigerian economy. Even as bad as this may portray, people with assorted skills and creative minds chose Fine and Applied as career are able to find their ways into full employment either for themselves or for others who are not in line of their professions. Such set of people, based upon their skills-dependent trainings, are able to survive and find their way out of poverty thereby overcoming what could have put such individuals into economic depression.

From all indications, it is evident that Fine and Applied Arts is all encompassing. It is a means of employing diverse skills and power of imagination to express visual images. It is the knowledge and understanding of aesthetic worth with a kind of thought-provoking works and ideas that appeal to human sense of beauty and reasoning.

Concept and Components of Fine and Applied Arts

Arising from uncountable researches made upon the essentiality of Fine and Applied Arts, it is seen as a discipline that prepares individuals towards self-dependent lifestyles, this is because of its emphasis on in-born talents and development of skills to earn a living for oneself and others as well. Its capacity to ameliorate joblessness amongst the teens is incomparable. Hence, it is sure that insecurity can be easily overcome in a country like Nigeria. Fine and Applied Arts is an academic subject that can be explained along its name of "Fine" and "Applied" Arts, with each having different sub-divisions as its areas of specializations.

Applied Arts encompasses design and creative ideals that serve as objects of utilities. This includes cups, magazines or decorative items. So also, there are areas like industrial designs, graphic designs, fashion designs, interior designs, decorative cum functional items that are considered as applied arts as well.

In the creative context, the fields of architecture and photography are regarded as applied arts. Fine Arts on its part referred to as a kind of arts dealing with beauty and ones that appeal to taste. However, Fine Arts as an area that has to do with that branch of art which has no other function than the appeal it makes to man's sense of beauty. This includes painting, sculpture, drawing, art appreciation or art history, while Applied Arts on its own, is where works of art are adapted as craftworks for personal use of the artist or interested individuals. It is also for commercial purposes or for the industrial companies' consumptions. This includes areas of specializations like ceramics, graphics, textiles and dyeing, tailoring, pots making, glass and metal technology, metal and wood works among others (Uzuazor, 1990; Uzoagba, 2000).

Fine and Applied Arts is simply referred to as Visual Arts. Visual Arts are art forms that create works primarily visual in all ramifications. This includes ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, designing, crafts and other modern arts such as photography, videography, filmmaking, animation shootings, architecture and lithography (Adeyemo, 2012).

Fine and Applied Arts as a Concept to Overcome Joblessness

Joblessness is a condition wherein people who are capable of working actively searching for work and could not find any despite expertise and qualifications (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010; Wikipedia, 2013). It is emphasized that unemployment rate is a measure of the extent of joblessness amongst younger generations. It is calculated in percentages by dividing the number of unemployed individuals by total number of individuals currently in the labour force. As it can be deduced in the report of International Labour Organization (ILO) (2013), global economy usually experiences a relatively high unemployment rate during the periods of recessions.

Young people remain particularly stricken by the crisis of looking for jobs. Currently, some 73.8 million younger people are unemployed globally, meaning that the slowdown in economic activity is likely to push another half million into joblessness by 2014. Signaling that youth unemployment rate that had already increased to 12.6 per cent in 2012 is likely increase to 12.9 per cent by 2017. The crisis has dramatically diminished the labour market prospects for young people (International Labour Organization, 2013).

Based upon the above report, the Chairman Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P) reported that about 40 million Nigerians (about 23.9%) are unemployed. Citing the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the Chairman explained further that one of the challenges of unemployment ravaging the

younger generation is the inability of the system to absorb more than 500,000 graduates coming out of our tertiary institutions. In fact, the 5th aim of Technical Education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education in Akubuilo (2000) is to inculcate the necessary skills into the youths in order to becoming craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel, eventually to become someone who will be enterprising and self-reliant.

An Overview of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

Unemployment is a serious issue in Nigeria because it has caused a lot damage and distraction to the people and the environment. Unemployment is a very complex phenomenon and hard to define. Simply put, the term unemployment implies a condition of joblessness. Understandably, it can also be referred to as a phenomenon where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid work. Rufai et al (2013) noted that unemployment is a condition in which people who are willing to work at the normal large rate are unable to find jobs.

The unemployment situation in Nigeria has led most youths to go into crime because of their relative deprivation and acute sense of want. Crime is a violent approach in solving established negative situation as it were with Nigerian situation, it causes huge threat to the public safety, vast material damage and place enormous burden on their evictions. Tambari and Imoh-Ita (2016) averred that youth's unemployment and its relationship with crime is part of major social problems affecting the growth and development in Nigeria. Tambari and Imoh-Ita (2016) further advice and suggested that factors that increase youths' unemployment in Nigeria should be addressed to reduce crime. In corroboration, it is believed that if effective enforcement of teaching vocation skill subjects like Fine and Applied Arts in schools is carried out, it will go a long way in ameliorating the menace of youths' restiveness.

Fine and Applied Arts as a Vocational Skill Acquisition Subject for Combating Youth Restiveness and Unemployment in Nigeria

Fine and Applied Arts is one of the vocational subjects being approved to be taught at all level of education in Nigeria. But Ganagana (2003) pointed out that there is a major set-back due to non-availability of required infrastructure, staff, materials and equipment to carry out this. Agbolor et al. (2014) points out that Fine and Applied Arts course is a profession that has uplifted and facilitates the development of man socially, practically, economically, culturally and educationally. This assertion is true because ever since man started to pursue his development on earth, art ideas and experience in terms of exploring has been one medium through which man has provided essential amenities needed for him to survive, promote and preserve his cultural heritage. The basic ideas and experiments were developed by artistic craftsmanship and vocational training.

Craftsmanship is simply put as skill at making things. Collins English Dictionaries (2018) view it as the skill that someone uses when they make beautiful things with their hands. Fine and Applied Arts is also a subject which encourages the development of craftsmanship; in fact, it builds the premise of developing craftsmen. Although in the past, Fine and Applied Art practice is usually achieved through craftsmanship and apprenticeship, the young ones will learn skill from their parents or elder persons especially during the pre-historic era. But in these contemporary days, craftsmanship has been developed into Fine and Applied Arts and it is being taught at all levels of educational institution in Nigeria. Interesting, its practice according to Ganagana (2003), has helped in developing the potentials of youths in Nigeria.

Ganagana (2003) further explained that in recent times, teaching of Fine and Applied Arts is faced with a number of challenges which is hampering its functionality in trying to train students or youths to effectively acquire vocational skills making them relevant after leaving schools. Ganagana et al. (2007) observe that acquisition of vocational skills leads to a significant reduction of poverty and unemployment. It is obvious that vocational skill acquisition is vital towards the development of man and his society, therefore, if vocational subject or course like Fine and Applied Arts is being taught effectively in schools in Nigeria, it will help to combat or tackle the issue of youths restiveness and unemployment, because when the youths have skill they will employed or engage by employers or by themselves and it will make them not to be idle and have time for crime.

Fine and Applied Arts Entrepreneurship

Recently, there has been new development both in basic and higher levels of education system in Nigeria as Fine and Applied Arts has been incorporated into the education system curricula. This new development will equip graduates with the skills necessary to succeed in the labour market. However, existing literature by Bridgstock (2011) and Oyekunle (2015) as cited in Oluwayemisi and Mammo (2021) suggests that traditional art education models, which focus on school curricula and projects, have not been effective in fostering high levels of self-employment among art graduates. Arts entrepreneurship education is a relatively new discipline within the cultural and creative industries in higher education systems.

Despite its growing importance, scholars have largely overlooked the entrepreneurial aspects of arts education (Milie & Migliaccio, 2017). This oversight is particularly concerning in Africa, where community support for arts enterprises has been declining. The concept of arts entrepreneurship began to take shape in the previous decade, with various models emerging to better understand the products of cultural and creative industries (Oyekunle, 2017; Toghraee et al., 2018).

Fine and Applied Arts as a Platform for Creating Jobs

Fine and Applied Arts is an aspect of discipline under Vocational and Technical Education that has the potentials to ameliorate the ugly situation of joblessness amongst the teeming youths. This is by paving ways for self-employment life for every individual within the country. In the same vein, Mamza (2007) noted that the National Policy on Education has provisions for the teaching of skills development-oriented subjects like Fine and Applied Arts at all levels of education. This acknowledged the role of this form of education as one of the most fundamental instruments for self-reliant lifestyle for every citizen and virile economy for a country. This implied that Fine and Applied Arts is one of the disciplines in any educational programme that avails individual's opportunities of acquiring appropriate skills, abilities and competences (mental and physical) for a chosen carrier thereby serving as a platform of ensuring life of prosperities for the individuals. This gives such individuals opportunities to be able to live independently.

Fine and Applied Arts is a kind of a subject with natural values inherent in it. A form of education that can serve as a pivotal agent of reducing joblessness, it is a kind of education that maintains that a strong link with every sector by providing other sectors with properly trained personnel who depend upon their skills to produce goods and services that can compete with those from foreign nations thereby stimulating economic prosperities for individuals and the nation at large. It is a form of education that stimulates business activities amongst the citizens, one that attracts enormous revenue for every nation wherein this aspect of education is meticulously implemented. It is something that ensures availability of high-quality work force. This is attested to in the words of Adeyemo (2011), the combined knowledge and skills in areas like sculpture and others reinforce our survival and development.

It is very important to note that Fine and Applied Arts has shown to be a very potent strategy of revitalizing rural areas, igniting cities through skills dependent younger generations. This is by ensuring that the individuals are productively engaged to make such individuals self-reliant and earn a living for themselves and others as well, meaning that individuals who would have been struggling with poverty as result of joblessness are taken care of. Arising from the foregoing, one may not be wrong then to conclude that Fine and Applied Arts is the brain-box of any economy.

There are equally many areas of specialization in Fine and Applied Arts that open up opportunities for learning within certain period of time. It also has the capacities to serve as means of livelihood, for those who are not privileged to attend formal schools. Not only that, it can serve as auxiliary opportunities for those who wish to learn to help themselves economically. Such areas include resist dyed fabrics (Adire Eleko/Oloka), tie and dye (Adire Eleso), batik (Wax Resist), printings (Silk-Screen, Banner making, Signage, Decorative Carvings and Welding). It equally covers areas like portraiture and imaginative compositions in drawing, painting and sculpture. It means that all these put together, and if effectively

embraced have the potentiality to reduce the rate of joblessness amongst younger generations in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The indispensable role of Fine and Applied Arts in a nation driven to achieve prosperity and development through vocational skill acquisition cannot be over emphasized. If vocational skill subjects like Fine and Applied Arts are taught effectively in schools, both at basic and higher institutions, youth will be skilled and this will enable them to be employed or self-reliant. Thus, it will hinder them from going into youth restiveness and also solve the lingering challenge of unemployment.

Policy Way Forward

This paper recommends that:

1) Fine and Applied Arts should be a compulsory subject to be taught in schools in Nigeria as to enable students on graduation to be self-reliant.
2) Government should create more skill acquisition centers to train youths nationwide.
3) Nigerian government and private investors should create or sponsor good skill acquisition programmes for the Nigerian youths.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX

A REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN BUILDING RESILIENT AQUACULTURE VALUE CHAIN

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Introduction

Aquaculture has always provided support for food security, livelihoods, and economic growth all over the world, both in the subsistence and commercial sector. However, small-scale aquaculture has some limitation, which includes the shortage of women participation in building a resilient aquaculture value chain. Within the food security system, women often play a critical role in the processing and sales of aquaculture products but participate less in production/capturing/ culturing/field work because of several constraints. There is a need for visibility, rights, and economic participation of women in different aquaculture value chain. Recognizing that women are critical but often undervalued poses a significant threat to food security. This paper reviews insights into gender norms, roles, participation, relations, and benefits derived by women engaged in the aquaculture sector, provide an understanding of the role of women in building resilient aquaculture value chain and this will help contribute to implementing necessary policies and intervention strategies tailored to the specific needs of women in aquaculture value chain.

Aquaculture Value Chain

Aquaculture is a fast growing food sector that produces fish which is a primary source of protein for man and animals and has become an important part of food security Ikenga, Nwabueze, Ekelemu (2024). The term aquaculture is explained as the breeding, raising, and harvesting of fish and other aquatic animals in an enclosure.

Value chain is the activity a company performs to create value for its customers, from accessing the raw materials to supplying the final product or service. It comprises of all the stages that help to improve the value of a product or products. Value chain helps to bring services or products from conception, through production, transformation and marketing to delivery to final consumers and final disposal after use (Kapinsky and Morris, 2000). It encompasses the flow of products, knowledge and information, finance, payments, and social capital needed to organize different activities. In aquaculture, value chain can be describe

as activities needed to produce, process, sell, and consume different fish and/or fish products.

Aquaculture value chain is the activity involved in aquaculture production, processing and marketing till it gets to the final consumer. This helps to extend shelf life of fish, increase market value, promote gender equity, foster economic growth and create jobs. Interestingly women are actively involved in aquaculture value chain even though they are undermined.

Gender equality is recognized internationally and boldly stated in the Nigeria's sustainable development goals (SDG 5- achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), ending all discrimination against women and girls for sustainable future (United Nations 2023). The significance of aquaculture cannot be over emphasized and despite the fact that women's importance in the agricultural sector has received growing acknowledgement over the years, their contributions in the fish value chain is still been undermined as they are referred to as weaker vessels in terms of strengths (Adeoye 2020)

Women In Aquaculture Production

Most times, people attribute aquaculture to a man's sector, forgetting the fact that women play significant role in that same sector, with their labour been invisible and undermined, most especially in their direct and indirect roles in processing, value addition, and marketing. Despite the notion that men participate in production of fish while women participate in processing and marketing, both sexes are actively involved in aquaculture and value addition to earn money and food for the family. The role of women's cannot be over emphasized without laying emphasis on their impact and the potential for aquaculture to significantly boost its long term contribution to world fish supplies will be diminished if they are not actively involved even on a small scale level and household aquaculture. A lot of women in aquaculture are mothers and wives, whose major concerns are the welfare of their families.

According to Olufayo (2012), women participation in aquaculture in Nigeria is on the increase and it has increased the availability of fish market, provided employment opportunities, provided food (protein) rich in fat and water-soluble vitamins, minerals and fatty acids, and so many more but there is still marginalization.

Women in hatchery operations

Women are actively and increasingly involved in hatchery operations like egg care, fry nursing, sorting, cleaning, and maintenance and hatchery record keeping. In Nigeria, women's involvement in hatchery is rather supportive than owner based, because of so many constraints like capital availability, land, and many more, regardless, women are resilient and perform actively in hatchery operations. Women involvement in hatchery operation influences productivity, from brood stock care, egg handling, rearing of larval, water quality management, biosecurity, creating

stable market demand. The strength of women in managing the daily routine in hatchery contributes greatly to quality seed with good market value.

Women in processing, preservation and marketing

Women constitute up to 85% of the workforce during fish processing and marketing aimed at reducing post-harvest losses FAO (2022). Adam, Njogu and Ouko (2025) reported that 80 % of fish processors are women stating that it paves way for their ability to live healthy and productive lives as well as taking care of their immediate families especially the kids. Adam, *et al.,* (2025) also asserted that 80 % of the work force in processing are women with only 7 % are in production. Fish is highly perishable and needs high level of management strategies. Fish marketing requires less time, so women can easily multi-task between marketing and managing their homes. It is also reported by that 58 % of women are actively involved in post-harvest activities (gutting, drying, and preservation) in the aquaculture value chain FAO (2020) as it puts food on their table. Value addition significantly increases the value of the aquaculture product and thus the economic empowerment of the traders. Women are actively involved in fish smoking, drying, frying, packaging, storage and finally marketing as a major income source for household.

A study by Adam *et al.*, (2025) in Ogun and Delta States, Nigeria established that the major actors within this chain are input suppliers, fisher folks, and processors followed by retailers and consumers. Input suppliers include hatcheries, proprietors of nurseries, fish feed merchants, and other input suppliers (including seed traders). It depicts the aquaculture value chain showing the access and modes of activity for men and women. Men participate more in input supplies (71 %) as well as in the field work/fish farming (small scale and large scale farmers- 70 %). Women form 60 % of the retailers, 50 % of wholesalers, 80% of fish processors who in most cases add value to the fish products and sell to consumers and retailers alike, and 14% of intermediaries who buy fish directly from the fishermen and sell to the wholesalers and retailers. Findings from the study indicate that traders in each market come from different states, regions, and towns and are not necessarily from within the locality. The majority of the respondents in the consumption node of the value chain are women (60%) compiled across Ogun and Delta States. Below (fig 1) is an illustration of the study on gender dynamics and disparities in the aquaculture value chain-

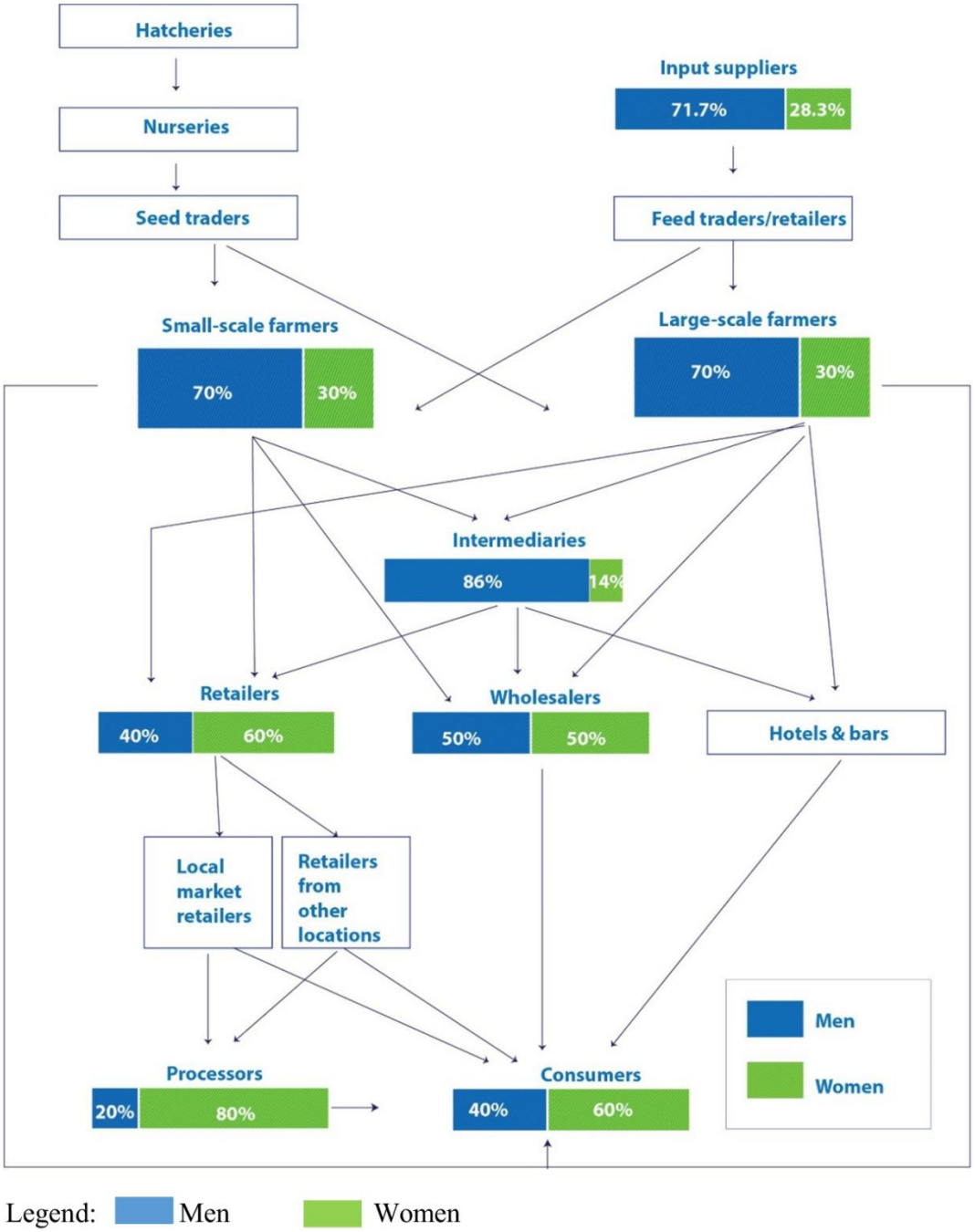

Fig 1- Men and women's estimated rate of participation in the aquaculture value chain.

Challenges women face in aquaculture value chain

Women in aquaculture value chain face multiple challenges that limit their productivity and income generation, and these include high cost of fish feed, limited fish seed supply, low access to income, restricted access to land, limited access to modern infrastructure and facility. Other challenges are- decision making challenge,

weak policy that does not support women, resulting in gender inequality, lack of extension services and training, gender norm and socio-cultural belief that cause barrier or marginalizes them and make them seen as weak and categorizing the sector for only men because of the hard work involved (occupational segregation in aquaculture value chain). Adeleke *et al.*, (2020). All these and more limit women's involvement and capability to be involved in higher value roles in the value chain despite their importance.

Ways to strengthen the roles of women in aquaculture value chain

The resilience of women in aquaculture value chain has the ability of enhance, adapt and boost the economy while improving livelihood. According to FAO (2024), the following ways can help strengthen women's role in aquaculture value chain-

1. Creating avenue for women's voices to be heard, thereby making them independent. Trainings, workshops and seminars can be conducted to bring many of these women under one canopy, and also giving them opportunity to speak up.
2. Creating opportunities for women to exchange experience and build a force, this helps to build their confidence, bring them to limelight, make them have value for their work an know others fully appreciate what they are doing.
3. Participatory scientific research to empower women in aquaculture value chain.
4. Strengthening women's organisation through the right partnership.
5. Improving women's access to funds for business development.
6. Establishing gender equity policies that promotes equal representation and pay.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that women are actively involved in various activities across the aquaculture value chain. Women's participation helps to promote the blue economy, provide food security with improved nutrition, creation of employment opportunities, and income generation for themselves and families. Different industries have devoted themselves not to leaving anyone behind and thus it is fundamental to recognize human dignity as it is in the context of Agenda 2030. In the aquaculture sector, the voices of women need to be heard all over the world despite facing constraints over factors of production, access to funds, and gender norms tagging them as weaker vessels in terms of strength. Women should not be disadvantaged because of obvious reasons but given equal opportunity and access to all aspects of the value chain from production, processing and marketing as this will help overcome sociocultural norm. It should be noted that women have full potential in aquaculture resulting in enhanced production, productivity, processing, trade, and economic growth. Women's involvement in post-harvest operations like processing, marketing and distribution of fish has not been given due attention and appreciation. Furthermore, the women in aquaculture should be given improved and affordable processing technologies for easy and rapid adoption, and empowered to contribute their quota to promote food security which will promote the first and second sustainable development goals (SDGs) (no poverty and zero hunger).

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CHAPTER SIXTY-SEVEN

LIBRARIES AND FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Libraries play a significant role in addressing food security in Nigeria through various initiatives that promote knowledge sharing, education, and community engagement. In a country where access to food is pressing issue for many, libraries serve as vital institutions that can provide resources, information, and support to help combat hunger and malnutrition.

One of the key ways in which libraries contribute to addressing food security is through education and awareness programmes. Libraries often organize workshops, seminars, and training sessions that focus on topics related to agriculture, nutrition and food production. These programmes aim to educate individuals about sustainable farming practices, healthy eating habits, and ways to improve food security in their communities. By offering these resources and opportunities for learning libraries empower individuals to make informed decisions about food consumption, production and distribution (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2019).

In addition to education, Swiderski and Beecher (2019) asserts that libraries also play a crucial role in providing access to information and resources that can help individuals and communities improve their food security. Libraries typically maintain collections of books, journals, and other materials on agriculture, food science, and nutrition that can be used for research and reference. By making these resources available to the public, libraries enable individuals to access valuable information that can help them address food security challenges more effectively.

Libraries often serve as hubs for community engagement and collaboration on food security issues. Many libraries host events, discussions, and initiatives that bring together diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, community groups, and individuals, to address food security challenges. Fostering dialogue and collaboration among different actors, libraries help facilitate the development of innovative solutions and strategies for improving food security at the local and national levels (Ogunbowale, 2020).

Moreover, libraries support agricultural and rural development through the provision of access technology and digital resources. In Nigeria, where many farmers face challenges related to access of information, markets, and resources, libraries can serve as an important center for technology training, internet access, and information services. Providing access to digital resources and tools, libraries help farmers and agricultural communities access up-to-date information on market trends, weather patterns, pest control, and other relevant topics that can help improve agricultural productivity and food security (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2021).

Furthermore, libraries can also play a role in promoting sustain able agriculture and food production practices that contribute to long-term food security in Nigeria. Libraries can provide resources and information on organic farming, permaculture, agroecology, and other sustainable farming methods that can help reduce reliance on chemical in puts, improve soil health, and enhance crop yields. Promoting these practices, libraries can help build resilient and sustainable food systems that and better with stand challenges such as climate change, pests, and market fluctuations.

Contributions of Libraries in Promoting Agricultural Knowledge Information Dissemination

Libraries promotes agricultural knowledge information dissemination by providing access to a wide range of resources and fostering information literacy among farmers, researchers, students, and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector. Here are some key contributions of libraries in this regard according to Sule (2019):

Access to diverse collection: Libraries curate and offer a vast collection of books, journals, reports and other agricultural resources, including technical manuals, research articles, and market reports. This enables users to stay abreast on the latest trends, best practices and innovation in agriculture.

Digital Resources and databases: Many libraries subscribe to online databases and digital repositories, such AGORA, Resarch4life, CAB Abstracts that provide access to scientific literature and research findings in the field of agriculture. These resources facilitate evidence-based decision-making and promote knowledge sharing among agricultural stakeholders.

Reference services and research support: Librarians provide reference services and research assistant to users seeking information on specific agricultural topics. They help users navigate library collections, conduct literature searches, and locate relevant resources to support their information needs.

Training and workshops: Libraries organize training session and workshops on information literacy, research skills, and access to electronic resources for farmers, extension workers, and students in agriculture. These initiatives help build capacity and enhance the information literacy skills of agricultural stakeholders.

Collaboration and partnerships: Libraries collaborate with agricultural organizations, research institutions, and government agencies to improve access to agricultural information and promote knowledge dissemination. These partnerships enable libraries to leverage resources and expertise to support agricultural development initiatives.

Community Empowerment to Enhance Food Production and Access

Community empowerment is an important element in enhancing food production access, especially in low income or developing communities. Empowering individuals and groups with in the communities to take control of their food systems, resources and decision-making processes, sustainable solutions can be Community empowerment in the context of food production and access is ensuring that local knowledge and resources are utilized effectively. This means involving community members in decision-making processes, identifying and addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by each community, and building upon existing knowledge and skills. Empowering individuals and communities to utilize their own resources and expertise, more sustainable and effective solutions can be developed (Eker & Canali, 2014).

Utilizing local knowledge and resources community empowerment also involves building training and education on sustainable farming practices, irrigation techniques s,and crop management, as well as support in accessing markets and resources. Building the capacity of communities to engage in productive and sustainable food production, individuals are better equipped to address food in security and improve access to nutritious food (Eker & Canali, 2014). Furthermore, community empowerment can also play an important role in advocating for policies and practices that support sustainable food production and access by organizing and mobilizing communities members to engage with local governments, decision-makers, and other stakeholders, communities can work to influence policies and practices that affect food production and access. This include advocating for land rights, access to resources, and fair trade practices, as well as promoting food sovereignty and agro ecological approaches to agriculture (FAO, 2018).

Significance of Leveraging Library Resources and Information Services to Support Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition Initiatives in Nigeria

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of sustainable agriculture and nutrition in Nigeria. With a rapidly growing population and increasing food in security, the need for sustainable practices that can ensure food security and improve nutrition has become more urgent. Leveraging library resources and information services play a crucial role in supporting sustainable agriculture and nutrition initiatives in the country (Adams, 2018).

Libraries are an essential source of information and knowledge on a wide range of topics, including agriculture and nutrition. They provide access to a vast array of resources, including books, journals, research report and databases that

can help farmers, policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders in the agriculture and nutrition sector to make informed decisions and adopt sustainable practices. Leveraging these resources, stakeholders can access the latest research and information on sustainable agriculture and nutrition practices, innovations, and technologies that can help improve food security and nutrition in the country (F.A.O.2019).

One of the key ways in which library resources can support sustainable agriculture and nutrition initiatives in Nigeria is by providing access to research and information on best practices in sustainable farming techniques. This includes information on organic farming, conservation agriculture, and other sustainable practices that can help increase agricultural productivity while minimizing environmental impact. Accessing this information, farmers can learn about new innovative techniques that can help them improve their crop yields, reduce the use of harmful chemicals, and promote soil health and fertility (Adams, 2018).

Providing information on sustainable farming practices, libraries can also support sustainable agriculture and nutrition initiatives by providing access to information on crop diversification, water management, climate, smart agriculture, and other practices that can help farmers adapt to the changing climate and improve their resilience to droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events. Access this information, farmers can learn how to better manage their resources, reduce waste, and optimize their production in a sustainable manner.

Libraries support nutrition initiatives by providing access to information on healthy eating habits, food processing and preservation, and the nutritional value of different foods. This information is essential for promoting healthy diets, combating malnutrition and addressing the double burden of under nutrition and over nutrition in Nigeria. By accessing this information, policymakers, health professionals, and the general public can learn about the importance of a balanced diet, and how to make informed choices about their food consumption (Matarazzo & Doyle, 2017).

Conclusion

Despite the valuable role that libraries play in enhancing food security in Nigeria, there are still challenges that needs to be addressed. Limited funding, inadequate infrastructure and lack of trained staff pose significant obstacles to the effective functioning of libraries in the country; there is need for greater collaboration and coordination among libraries, government agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach to addressing food security.

Libraries are essential parties in promoting food security and improving nutrition in Nigeria. Through their diverse resources, services and programmes, libraries contribute to enhancing agricultural productivity, promoting healthy eating habits and raising awareness about food security issues. Investing in libraries and

supporting their efforts, Nigeria can take important strides towards achieving food security and improving the well-being of its citizens. It is important that policymakers, funding agencies and stakeholders recognize the insecurity and provide necessary support to strengthen their capacity and impact in the country

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CHAPTER SIXTY-EIGHT

MANAGING GENDER DISCREPANCY IN NIGERIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

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Introduction

Gender discrepancy in the Nigerian political system remains one of the most pressing democratic and developmental challenges facing the country today. Although women make up almost half of Nigeria's population, their involvement in politics is still very low compared to men. Studies show that women's representation in elective and appointive political offices in Nigeria is less than 7 percent, despite the National Gender Policy that recommends a 35 percent affirmative action for women's inclusion (Ojo, 2023; Adebayo, 2024). This low participation has created an imbalance that weakens democratic growth, limits diverse representation, and slows down national development. Gender imbalance in politics is not just about numbers; it reflects deep-rooted social, economic, and cultural inequalities that restrict women's ability to compete fairly with men in political spaces. Nigeria's ranking among the lowest in Africa in terms of women's political empowerment shows that current policies and interventions have not been effective enough to close the gap (Salaudeen, 2024).

The persistence of gender discrepancy in Nigeria's political system is largely caused by a combination of structural, institutional, and cultural factors. At the institutional level, political party nomination systems favour men, and the high cost of political campaigns makes it difficult for women to compete (Dosumu, 2024). Many political parties do not follow gender inclusion policies strictly, and women who express political ambitions often face discrimination, intimidation, and lack of financial support (Olatunde & Musa, 2023). Cultural expectations also play a strong role, as many communities still see politics as a male-dominated activity. Women are expected to play supportive or domestic roles, while men are seen as leaders. These long-standing beliefs discourage women from joining political contests. Similarly, electoral violence and the absence of legal enforcement for gender policies further discourage women from contesting elections (Eze & Umeh, 2023). Therefore, the gender gap in Nigerian politics is not accidental but is sustained by systems and beliefs that work together to favour men over women.

The consequences of continued gender discrepancy are serious for Nigeria's democracy and development. A political system that excludes women loses valuable

perspectives, experiences, and talents that could improve governance and policymaking. Research shows that countries with higher levels of female participation in politics tend to have stronger social policies and more inclusive economic growth (Adebayo, 2024; Eze & Umeh, 2023). In Nigeria, the low involvement of women in political decision-making has resulted in weak attention to gender-based issues such as maternal health, education access for girls, and equal employment opportunities. This imbalance reduces the quality of governance and public trust in political institutions. Managing gender discrepancy therefore requires more than policy statements; it needs firm actions such as enforcing gender quotas, supporting female political education, reducing campaign costs, and changing cultural attitudes that limit women's leadership. Only through these combined efforts can Nigeria achieve a more balanced, fair, and effective political system that represents all its citizens equally.

Gender

Gender is a social construct that defines the roles, responsibilities, behaviors, and expectations that society assigns to individuals based on their biological sex. Unlike biological sex, which refers to physical and physiological differences between males and females, gender represents the social meaning attached to being male or female within a given cultural and historical context (Eze & Umeh, 2023). It determines how individuals are perceived, how they act, and how they interact with others in both private and public life. In most societies, including Nigeria, gender has become a central factor influencing access to power, resources, and opportunities. These socially defined roles are often unequal, with men positioned in more dominant and decision-making roles, while women are confined to supportive or domestic roles (Olatunde & Musa, 2023). As a result, gender is not merely a biological category but a dynamic social process that changes across time and cultures and shapes how individuals experience political, economic, and social life.

In the context of politics, gender determines who participates, who leads, and whose voices are heard in governance. This makes gender a critical concept in understanding power relations and inequality within the Nigerian political system. Scholars emphasize that gender is both a lens for analyzing social structure and a framework for identifying systemic imbalances that affect representation and participation (Adebayo, 2024). For instance, the political marginalization of women in Nigeria is not a result of lack of competence or interest but stems from the gendered organization of political parties, cultural norms, and institutional practices that sustain male dominance (Dosumu, 2024). Understanding gender in this way helps explain why efforts to promote equality must go beyond providing women with opportunities to contest elections; they must also challenge the social norms and institutional barriers that create and reinforce unequal power relations. Therefore, gender is best understood as a socially constructed and politically

significant category that both reflects and shapes patterns of inequality within Nigerian society.

Gender Discrepancy

Gender discrepancy refers to the persistent inequality and imbalance between men and women in access to opportunities, resources, and participation in decision-making across different sectors of society. It reflects the gap that exists when one gender, usually men has more representation, authority, and privilege, while the other, usually women remains underrepresented or marginalized (Ojo, 2023). This concept goes beyond biological or physical differences; it captures the social, cultural, and institutional patterns that produce unequal outcomes for men and women. In Nigeria, gender discrepancy is most visible in politics, where men occupy the majority of leadership positions, and women's voices remain largely absent in decision-making processes. Studies have shown that this imbalance is reinforced by patriarchal structures, discriminatory cultural norms, and limited access to education and economic power among women (Salaudeen, 2024). Gender discrepancy, therefore, is not simply a matter of numbers; it is a reflection of unequal power relations that restrict one gender's ability to influence policy and governance.

In the Nigerian political context, gender discrepancy manifests in low female representation at all levels of government, unequal access to political resources, and limited policy attention to gender-sensitive issues. Scholars have described this as a democratic deficit that weakens governance and national development (Dosumu, 2024). Women's underrepresentation in politics means that their perspectives, needs, and priorities are often ignored in policymaking. For example, despite Nigeria's adoption of the 35% affirmative action policy, implementation has remained weak, and women continue to hold less than 7% of elective and appointive positions nationally (Adebayo, 2024). This imbalance has implications for equity, justice, and democratic inclusiveness. Managing gender discrepancy, therefore, involves deliberate actions to reduce these inequalities through legal reforms, social reorientation, and institutional restructuring. It demands that both men and women are given equal platforms to participate, contribute, and benefit from the political process, ensuring that governance reflects the collective will and potential of the entire population.

Gender Equality

Gender equality refers to the state in which men and women have equal access to opportunities, rights, responsibilities, and resources in every area of life, including politics, education, employment, and decision-making. It is built on the principle that both genders should be treated fairly, without discrimination or bias, and that their contributions should be equally valued in all social, economic, and political processes (Eze & Umeh, 2023). In essence, gender equality ensures that

individuals are not disadvantaged or privileged simply because of their gender. It emphasizes equal treatment and fair outcomes, taking into account historical and structural inequalities that have placed women at a disadvantage in most societies (Olatunde & Musa, 2023). Gender equality is a cornerstone of human rights and a critical component of sustainable development, as recognized by global frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5, which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The idea goes beyond providing equal opportunities on paper; it also requires the removal of social, cultural, and institutional barriers that hinder equal participation.

In the Nigerian political context, gender equality implies that both men and women should have equal opportunities to participate in governance, contest elections, hold political office, and influence policy decisions. However, this ideal has not been fully achieved due to persistent structural and cultural barriers that continue to limit women's participation in politics (Dosumu, 2024). Studies have shown that where gender equality is upheld, political systems tend to be more transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of all citizens (Adebayo, 2024). Achieving gender equality in Nigeria's political landscape therefore requires more than symbolic inclusion; it demands institutional reforms, enforcement of gender laws, political education, and public reorientation that promotes women's leadership and participation. Gender equality, when realized, creates a balanced political system where decisions reflect the needs and perspectives of both men and women, leading to more inclusive and effective governance.

Political Participation

Political participation refers to the active involvement of citizens in the political processes and decision-making structures of a society. It encompasses all actions through which individuals influence or seek to influence government policies, leadership selection, and the overall direction of governance. Such actions include voting, contesting elections, engaging in political debates, joining political parties, and contributing to policy formulation (Ojo, 2023). Political participation is fundamental to democratic governance because it ensures that the voices and interests of citizens are represented in political decisions. In the Nigerian context, however, political participation has remained unevenly distributed across gender lines, with men dominating most political spaces while women face numerous barriers that limit their involvement. These barriers range from financial constraints and cultural stereotypes to institutional exclusion and political violence (Dosumu, 2024). Genuine political participation therefore requires not only the right to vote or contest but also equal access to political information, resources, and opportunities for both men and women. When inclusively practiced, political participation strengthens accountability, enhances legitimacy, and ensures that governance reflects the collective aspirations of the entire population (Adebayo, 2024; Eze & Umeh, 2023).

Historical Overview of Women's Political Participation in Nigeria

Pre-colonial and Colonial Political Systems and Women's Roles

In the pre-colonial Nigerian political system, women played significant and respected roles in governance, decision-making, and community administration. Societies such as the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa recognized women as integral to political life, where they held positions such as the Iyalode among the Yoruba, the Omu among the Igbo, and the Magajiya among the Hausa, each serving as a political, economic, and social leader within her community (Okafor & Sule, 2023). These positions empowered women to participate in policy discussions, adjudicate disputes, and mobilize citizens for communal development. Women were also custodians of certain spiritual and cultural institutions that directly influenced governance and leadership selection. However, the advent of colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries fundamentally altered these dynamics. The imposition of the British colonial administrative system, characterized by indirect rule, marginalized women by recognizing only male traditional authorities and excluding women from formal governance structures (Ekanem, 2022).

During the colonial era, the patriarchal bias of the colonial administration reinforced gender inequality, limiting women's access to political leadership and property rights. The British perception of governance as a male domain erased pre-existing systems that gave women public authority, thereby institutionalizing gender hierarchy within political and economic structures (Abubakar, 2023). As a result, women were confined largely to domestic roles and informal sectors, while political power became centralized in the hands of men. Nonetheless, women resisted this subjugation through collective activism such as the Aba Women's Riot of 1929, which demonstrated their capacity for organized political resistance and advocacy for equity (Ogunleye & Danjuma, 2024). The legacies of colonial exclusion continue to shape post-colonial Nigerian politics, where women's representation remains disproportionately low despite democratic reforms. Understanding the historical evolution of women's political roles is therefore essential in addressing the persistent gender discrepancies that undermine inclusive governance in Nigeria today.

Post-Independence Trends in Gender Inclusion

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, expectations were high that the new democratic dispensation would restore and expand women's political rights that had been suppressed during colonial rule. However, gender inclusion in political leadership evolved slowly and unevenly, reflecting deep-seated patriarchal norms and institutional discrimination. In the early post-independence era, women's representation in political structures remained marginal, as male-dominated parties failed to provide equal opportunities for female candidates (Ibrahim & Okon, 2022). Women's political involvement was largely limited to mobilization roles within party wings, rather than decision-making positions. Despite these challenges,

pioneering figures such as Margaret Ekpo, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, and Hajia Gambo Sawaba emerged as prominent voices advocating women's rights, political inclusion, and social justice (Ezeani & Onyekachi, 2023). Their activism laid the foundation for the contemporary gender equality movement in Nigeria, but structural barriers such as cultural stereotypes, financial constraints, and political intimidation continued to hinder broader female participation.

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, democratic transitions brought renewed attention to gender inclusion. Policies such as the 35% affirmative action recommendation in the 2006 National Gender Policy sought to increase women's representation in elective and appointive positions, although implementation has been inconsistent (Adelakun & Usman, 2024). Women's participation in politics showed modest progress during the Fourth Republic, with a few achieving ministerial and legislative positions; however, representation has never exceeded 7% in the National Assembly (Udo & Bello, 2023). The introduction of international frameworks such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals further reinforced the need for gender-balanced governance, yet the political landscape remains largely exclusionary. Post-independence trends thus reveal a paradox of formal commitment to gender inclusion without corresponding structural transformation. To achieve meaningful progress, Nigeria must move beyond tokenism to institutionalize gender equality through policy reforms, political education, and equitable resource allocation that empower women to participate competitively in governance.

Policy Efforts (e.g., National Gender Policy, 35% Affirmative Action, Beijing Declaration)

Over the past two decades, Nigeria has implemented several policy frameworks aimed at addressing gender imbalance and promoting women's participation in governance. Central to these efforts is the National Gender Policy (NGP) of 2006, which set a 35% Affirmative Action benchmark to ensure equitable representation of women in all decision-making bodies. The policy sought to institutionalize gender mainstreaming across political, economic, and social sectors, promoting women's inclusion as a fundamental aspect of national development (Oluwole & Danjuma, 2023). However, while the NGP created a strategic framework for action, its implementation has faced numerous setbacks due to weak political will, inadequate monitoring mechanisms, and entrenched patriarchal norms within political parties and government institutions (Onwuka & Adebisi, 2022). Despite these challenges, the policy remains a crucial reference point for gender advocacy and continues to inspire calls for constitutional reforms that would legally enforce the 35% representation target in both elective and appointive positions.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 also played a transformative role in shaping Nigeria's gender policies. As a signatory to the

declaration, Nigeria committed to advancing gender equality through 12 critical areas of concern, including women in power and decision-making. This global framework influenced Nigeria's domestic agenda, leading to greater emphasis on women's empowerment and the inclusion of gender-sensitive policies in national development plans (Eze & Salami, 2024). Yet, the translation of these international commitments into actionable outcomes remains limited. The 35% Affirmative Action has been inconsistently applied, and women's political representation still hovers below 10% at both federal and state levels (Nnamani & Yusuf, 2023). Recent advocacy movements, such as the 2022 Federal High Court judgment upholding the implementation of the 35% Affirmative Action, represent renewed momentum toward accountability and structural reform (Okorie & Ibrahim, 2024). For Nigeria to achieve genuine gender inclusion, policy efforts must move from symbolic endorsement to enforceable legal frameworks backed by political will, adequate funding, and continuous public sensitization to dismantle cultural and institutional barriers that perpetuate gender disparity.

Statistical Representation of Women in Political Offices (Federal, State, and Local Levels)

Despite decades of advocacy and policy reforms, the statistical representation of women in Nigeria's political offices remains critically low across federal, state, and local government levels. Data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicate that in the 2023 general elections, women constituted only about 8.9% of candidates nationwide, with less than 7% successfully elected into public offices (Adamu & Ojo, 2024). At the federal level, out of 469 seats in the National Assembly, women secured only 17 seats; three in the Senate (2.7%) and fourteen in the House of Representatives (3.8%), a decline from previous years (Adeniran & Yusuf, 2023). Similarly, out of 43 ministerial appointments made in 2023, only six positions (13.9%) were occupied by women, falling short of the 35% Affirmative Action target. This persistent underrepresentation reflects the deeply entrenched patriarchal political structures and the lack of enforcement of gender equality policies.

At the state level, women's inclusion in governance also remains dismal. Across the 36 states, only four women currently serve as deputy governors, representing a meager 11% of total positions (Ibekwe & Hassan, 2023). The number of female members in State Houses of Assembly stands at approximately 58 out of 990 seats (5.8%), with no woman currently holding the position of state governor. The local government level, which arguably provides the best platform for grassroots political participation, presents an even more discouraging picture. Out of 774 local government councils, fewer than 5% of chairpersons and 10% of councilors are women (Eze & Mohammed, 2024). Such figures demonstrate

a systemic exclusion of women from critical decision-making roles, reinforcing gender inequality in leadership and policy formulation.

These statistics reveal that while Nigeria has made formal commitments to gender equality through frameworks such as the National Gender Policy and the Beijing Declaration, practical implementation has been insufficient. Cultural norms, economic marginalization, political violence, and discriminatory party nomination processes continue to limit women's competitiveness in elections. The data underscores an urgent need for stronger institutional reforms, including gender-sensitive electoral laws, equitable access to campaign financing, and the enforcement of the 35% Affirmative Action benchmark to foster genuine gender inclusion across all levels of government (Oladipo & Ekanem, 2022). Without these measures, Nigeria risks perpetuating a governance system that excludes half of its population from meaningful participation in national development.

Comparative Analysis of Nigeria and Other African Countries (e.g., Rwanda, South Africa)

A comparative analysis of Nigeria's gender inclusion in politics against other African nations such as Rwanda and South Africa exposes the alarming depth of Nigeria's underrepresentation of women in governance. Rwanda stands as a global benchmark for gender equality, with women occupying 61.3% of seats in the lower house of parliament and 38.5% in the senate, the highest worldwide (Mukamana & Habimana, 2023). This success is largely attributed to the adoption of constitutional gender quotas and post-genocide reconstruction policies that prioritized women's political empowerment as a tool for national stability. Similarly, South Africa has made remarkable progress through party-level quota systems, particularly within the African National Congress (ANC), which reserves at least 50% of political positions for women (Mthembu & Dlamini, 2024). Consequently, women currently hold 46% of seats in the South African National Assembly and occupy key cabinet portfolios including defense, foreign affairs, and social development. These nations demonstrate that deliberate legal frameworks, institutional reforms, and cultural shifts can drastically enhance women's representation and political influence.

Conversely, Nigeria continues to lag significantly behind, with women holding less than 7% of seats in the National Assembly, 13.9% of ministerial positions, and under 10% representation at state and local government levels (Adamu & Ojo, 2024). Unlike Rwanda and South Africa, Nigeria's gender inclusion policies remain largely declarative rather than enforceable. The 35% Affirmative Action stipulated in the National Gender Policy has not been legislatively mandated, allowing political parties to operate without accountability for gender representation (Okeke & Balogun, 2023). Furthermore, while Rwanda and South Africa have institutionalized women's wings in parliament and invested heavily in women's leadership development, Nigeria's political system remains characterized

by financial exclusion, electoral violence, and socio-cultural resistance to female leadership. The absence of gender-sensitive electoral laws and the dominance of patriarchal party structures further entrench these disparities (Olawale & Ndlovu, 2022).

This comparative view highlights that progress in women's political participation is not merely a function of democracy but of policy enforcement, gender-conscious leadership, and structural transformation. Rwanda and South Africa have demonstrated that when gender equality is treated as a constitutional obligation rather than a political favor, inclusion becomes institutionalized and self-sustaining. For Nigeria to catch up, it must adopt mandatory gender quotas, ensure political education for women, strengthen affirmative action enforcement, and dismantle the socio-political barriers that restrict women's entry into governance. Without these interventions, Nigeria risks remaining on the periphery of continental gender parity progress while other African nations consolidate inclusive democratic systems that better reflect their population diversity (Okafor & Moyo, 2024).

Socio-Cultural, Economic, and Institutional Barriers Limiting Female Participation in Nigerian Political System

Women's participation in politics in Nigeria is constrained by multiple interrelated barriers that operate at the socio-cultural, economic, and institutional levels. These barriers not only limit women's access to political positions but also affect their confidence, visibility, and influence in governance. The following are the major barriers and their explanations:

i. **Patriarchal Cultural Norms:** Nigeria's traditional societies are deeply patriarchal, with leadership culturally defined as a male prerogative. Women are socialized from childhood to play domestic and supportive roles, while men are trained to lead and make decisions. This mindset discourages women from pursuing political ambitions, as politics is often perceived as inappropriate for "decent women." In many communities, women must seek permission from husbands or family members to engage in public activities (Eze & Oladipo, 2023). Such cultural conditioning limits women's autonomy and reinforces the belief that governance and decision-making are male domains.

ii. **Religious Misinterpretations:** Certain religious interpretations, both Islamic and Christian are used to justify women's exclusion from leadership roles. Religious leaders and institutions sometimes promote doctrines that portray women as unfit for public leadership, emphasizing submissiveness and domestic responsibilities (Okonkwo & Danladi, 2022). These misinterpretations, though not aligned with the true principles of equality found in most religious texts, are used to maintain male dominance and suppress women's participation in governance.

iii. **Economic Marginalization:** Political participation in Nigeria is extremely capital-intensive, involving high costs for nomination forms, campaigns, and party mobilization. Due to gender disparities in employment, income, and access to credit

facilities, women lack the financial resources necessary to compete effectively with their male counterparts (Ibrahim & Chukwuma, 2023). The political system's reliance on financial patronage and godfatherism further excludes women who are often unable to sustain expensive political campaigns.

iv. **Political Violence and Intimidation:** Elections in Nigeria are frequently characterized by violence, thuggery, and intimidation—conditions that discourage women's participation. Female aspirants often face verbal abuse, harassment, and threats, both online and physically. This hostile political climate deters many capable women from running for office, as the system prioritizes aggression over competence (Ojo & Hassan, 2024).

v. **Weak Institutional Support:** While Nigeria has adopted several gender equality policies, including the National Gender Policy (2006) and the 35% Affirmative Action, these frameworks lack legal enforceability. Political parties rarely uphold internal gender quotas, and monitoring institutions such as the National Centre for Women Development remain underfunded and politically constrained (Ojo & Hassan, 2024). The failure to domesticate international gender conventions like CEDAW further reflects the institutional weakness in promoting female inclusion.

vi. **Media Bias and Stereotyping:** Media representation of women in politics often reinforces gender stereotypes. Female politicians are judged based on appearance, marital status, or personal behavior rather than competence or policy agenda. This negative portrayal affects public perception, reducing voter confidence in female leadership (Eze & Oladipo, 2023).

vii. **Limited Political Mentorship and Networks:** Women lack access to strong political mentorship and support networks that are vital for career advancement in politics. Most political parties and elite circles are dominated by male alliances that control nomination processes and campaign resources. The absence of women's mentorship programs and leadership training initiatives reduces women's exposure and experience in political decision-making (Okonkwo & Danladi, 2022).

viii. **Lack of Enforcement of Affirmative Action:** Although the National Gender Policy recommends 35% female representation in all decision-making bodies, the policy remains non-binding. Successive governments have failed to translate this recommendation into enforceable law, allowing political actors to disregard gender quotas without consequences (Ibrahim & Chukwuma, 2023). This lack of accountability perpetuates tokenism rather than genuine inclusion.

Implications of Gender Discrepancy on Governance and National Development

Gender discrepancy in governance undermines inclusivity, weakens democratic representation, and limits the diversity of ideas necessary for effective policy-making. When women are excluded from political leadership, development priorities often neglect social welfare, education, and healthcare issues that affect half the

population. Consequently, persistent gender imbalance in Nigeria's political system hampers national growth, equitable governance, and sustainable development.

1. **Impact on Decision-Making and Policy Diversity**

- ***Narrow Policy Perspectives:*** A major consequence of gender discrepancy in governance is the limitation of policy perspectives. When men dominate decision-making bodies, policies tend to reflect predominantly male interests and experiences. Women's insights—often centered on social welfare, education, healthcare, and family well-being—are underrepresented, leading to incomplete or biased policy outcomes (Okonkwo & Hassan, 2023). The absence of women's viewpoints ultimately reduces the responsiveness of government policies to the needs of the broader population.
- ***Decline in Democratic Representation:*** Excluding women from political decision-making undermines the principles of democracy, which rest on inclusivity and equal participation. A government that does not reflect the gender composition of its society lacks full legitimacy and accountability (Eze & Chukwuma, 2024). This imbalance reduces citizens' confidence in governance structures and perpetuates a cycle of political inequality where women's concerns are persistently marginalized.
- ***Reduced Innovation and Problem-Solving Capacity:*** Gender-diverse teams are proven to make more innovative and balanced decisions. Women tend to introduce collaborative, empathetic, and long-term approaches to governance that complement the often competitive and short-term focus of male counterparts (Ibrahim & Oladipo, 2022). The exclusion of women therefore limits creativity and the range of solutions in political problem-solving, resulting in slower adaptation to social and economic challenges.
- ***Weak Social and Economic Policy Outcomes:*** Gender imbalance in governance contributes to poor outcomes in key sectors like health, education, and social protection. Female leaders are more likely to advocate policies addressing poverty alleviation, maternal health, and child welfare (Ojo & Danladi, 2023). Their exclusion leads to a concentration on infrastructural or elite-oriented policies while neglecting grassroots development, thereby widening social inequality and hindering progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ***Reinforcement of Systemic Inequality:*** Persistent gender discrepancy reinforces the structural barriers that prevent women from entering politics in the first place. When decision-making bodies remain male-dominated, there is little incentive to enact reforms that promote gender inclusion or accountability. This perpetuates a self-sustaining cycle of exclusion where existing inequalities in education, finance, and political representation are continuously maintained (Eze & Oladipo, 2023). Over time, this weakens institutional fairness and stifles the evolution of inclusive governance systems.

2. **Effects on Democratic Consolidation and Social Justice**

- ***Weakening of Democratic Legitimacy:*** Gender discrepancy in political representation undermines the credibility and legitimacy of democratic governance. A democracy that systematically excludes half of its population from decision-making contradicts the fundamental principles of equality, participation, and representation (Okonkwo & Danladi, 2023). When women are underrepresented in legislative and executive positions, citizens perceive governance as elitist and unbalanced. This lack of inclusivity reduces public trust in democratic institutions and limits the sense of ownership citizens have over the political process.
- ***Distorted Representation of Public Interests:*** The exclusion of women from political structures distorts the representation of diverse social interests, especially those affecting women, children, and marginalized groups. Since policy priorities often reflect the demographic composition of leadership, the absence of women results in decisions that fail to address critical social justice issues such as gender-based violence, reproductive health, and equal access to education (Ibrahim & Oladipo, 2024). As a result, democracy becomes skewed toward the interests of dominant groups rather than serving as a platform for collective welfare.
- ***Entrenchment of Inequality and Marginalization:*** Persistent gender imbalance perpetuates a culture of systemic inequality where men continue to control political, economic, and social resources. This structural exclusion restricts women's access to leadership training, economic empowerment, and decision-making roles, thereby reinforcing patriarchal power structures (Eze & Hassan, 2022). Such conditions hinder democratic consolidation because genuine democracy thrives on inclusion, equity, and diversity.
- ***Decline in Accountability and Transparency:*** Research has shown that women in leadership roles are more likely to promote transparency, accountability, and community-focused governance. Their underrepresentation weakens oversight mechanisms and fosters corruption-prone systems dominated by political patronage (Ojo & Chukwuma, 2023). A gender-exclusive political environment, therefore, reduces institutional integrity and diminishes public accountability, key pillars necessary for democratic consolidation.
- ***Hindrance to Social Justice and Human Rights Protection:*** Gender discrepancy obstructs the achievement of social justice by preventing equitable access to political power and policy influence. Social justice demands that all citizens—irrespective of gender—have equal rights and opportunities to participate in governance. When women are excluded, it violates human rights conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (Eze & Oladipo, 2023). This not only undermines Nigeria's international commitments but also deepens internal inequalities, weakening the moral foundation of its democratic system.

3. **Consequences for Economic and Human Capital Development**

- ***Underutilization of Human Resources:*** Gender discrepancy in governance results in the systematic exclusion of women's talents, ideas, and leadership potential from national development processes. Women constitute nearly half of Nigeria's population, yet their contributions to policymaking, entrepreneurship, and innovation remain grossly underleveraged (Eze & Chukwuma, 2023). When women are excluded from political and economic decision-making, the nation fails to harness the full potential of its human resources, thereby limiting productivity and national competitiveness. This underutilization weakens Nigeria's overall economic performance and its ability to meet developmental goals.
- ***Reduced Economic Growth and Productivity:*** Empirical evidence across African countries shows that gender inequality correlates strongly with slower economic growth. When women are denied equal participation in leadership, employment, and political structures, economic diversification suffers (Ojo & Danladi, 2024). Inclusive governance tends to promote equitable access to education, financial resources, and social infrastructure—all essential for sustainable growth. Gender discrepancy, however, reinforces poverty cycles, restricts female labor force participation, and limits innovation, leading to a narrower and less resilient economy.
- ***Weak Investment in Human Capital Development:*** Women in leadership positions typically prioritize social development areas such as education, health, and community welfare—critical drivers of human capital formation. The absence of women in governance often shifts policy focus toward capital projects at the expense of human development initiatives (Ibrahim & Oladipo, 2023). Consequently, budget allocations for education, maternal health, and youth empowerment remain inadequate, resulting in poor literacy rates, higher maternal mortality, and lower workforce quality.
- ***Widening Income and Opportunity Gaps:*** Gender imbalance in politics perpetuates structural inequality, limiting women's access to economic opportunities, loans, and political appointments that could enhance financial independence. This inequality widens income gaps and reinforces economic dependency, particularly among women in rural areas (Okonkwo & Hassan, 2022). The absence of women in decision-making positions also means that gender-responsive economic reforms—such as equitable pay, property rights, and financial inclusion policies—are rarely prioritized, further entrenching inequality.
- ***Weak Institutional Support for Inclusive Development:*** Gender discrepancy weakens institutional frameworks that promote inclusive development. The absence of women in policy formulation results in limited advocacy for gender-responsive budgeting and equitable development programs. Moreover, institutions without diverse representation often lack the capacity to design inclusive social and economic reforms (Eze & Oladipo, 2023). This failure perpetuates social exclusion and hinders Nigeria's progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

particularly Goals 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Strategies for Managing Gender Discrepancy in Nigerian Political System

Gender discrepancy in Nigeria's political system poses a significant threat to inclusive governance and sustainable national development. Despite the existence of gender policies and affirmative action frameworks, women continue to face systemic exclusion from leadership and decision-making processes. Addressing this imbalance requires deliberate, multidimensional strategies that strengthen legal, institutional, and socio-economic foundations for gender equality and political empowerment.

i. ***Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks:*** A critical step in addressing gender discrepancy is to enforce existing legal frameworks and introduce binding legislation that guarantees women's inclusion in governance. The domestication and enforcement of international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration are essential (Ojo & Hassan, 2023). Furthermore, the National Gender Policy and the 35% Affirmative Action must be backed by enforceable laws with clear implementation and monitoring mechanisms. Political parties should be mandated by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to maintain a minimum quota of female candidates in elective and appointive positions, thereby institutionalizing gender balance in leadership.

ii. ***Promoting Gender-Sensitive Political Education and Awareness:*** Public reorientation through civic and political education can challenge deep-rooted patriarchal norms that discourage women's participation. Awareness campaigns should emphasize the democratic value of inclusivity and the developmental benefits of women's leadership (Eze & Chukwuma, 2024). Educational curricula at all levels should integrate gender equality education, while mass media should play a constructive role in portraying female leaders positively and countering stereotypes. Community engagement and sensitization, particularly in rural areas, can also shift traditional attitudes toward women in politics.

iii. ***Economic Empowerment of Women:*** Economic marginalization remains one of the most formidable barriers to women's political participation. Providing women with improved access to credit facilities, grants, and entrepreneurship programs can enhance their financial independence and capacity to fund political campaigns (Okonkwo & Danladi, 2022). Government and private institutions should expand economic inclusion initiatives such as women's cooperatives, vocational training, and digital entrepreneurship platforms. Economic empowerment directly increases political visibility and influence, enabling more women to compete effectively within Nigeria's male-dominated political landscape.

iv. ***Capacity Building and Mentorship Programs:*** Establishing structured mentorship programs that connect experienced female politicians with emerging women leaders can enhance confidence and political competence. Training programs

should focus on campaign management, policy formulation, leadership skills, and advocacy (Ibrahim & Oladipo, 2023). Non-governmental organizations, universities, and civil society groups can play a major role in fostering leadership development and creating networks that support women's advancement in politics. This strategy also promotes peer learning and intergenerational solidarity among women in governance.

v. ***Institutional Reforms within Political Parties:*** Political parties serve as the primary gatekeepers of leadership opportunities; hence, reforms must begin internally. Party constitutions should explicitly stipulate gender quotas in leadership structures and candidate nominations (Eze & Oladipo, 2023). Internal democracy should be strengthened to ensure fair participation in primaries and delegate processes. Financial barriers such as exorbitant nomination fees should be reduced for female aspirants. Additionally, women's wings in parties should be restructured beyond ceremonial functions to serve as policy advisory and mobilization platforms that influence strategic decision-making.

vi. ***Leveraging Technology and Media Advocacy:*** The digital era offers powerful tools for advocacy, mobilization, and capacity building. Social media platforms can amplify women's voices, enhance visibility, and facilitate nationwide networking among female leaders (Ojo & Hassan, 2023). Digital literacy programs targeting women in rural and urban communities should be prioritized to bridge the information gap and promote active online political engagement. Media organizations should also adopt gender-sensitive reporting frameworks that highlight women's contributions to governance and development.

vii. ***Strengthening Civil Society and International Collaboration:*** Civil society organizations (CSOs), feminist movements, and international partners play crucial roles in holding governments accountable for gender equity commitments. Partnerships with institutions such as UN Women, the African Union, and ECOWAS can provide technical and financial support for gender mainstreaming initiatives. Sustained collaboration with CSOs ensures consistent advocacy, research, and monitoring of gender equality progress across all levels of governance (Okonkwo & Danladi, 2022).

Conclusion

Gender discrepancy in the Nigerian political system remains a critical obstacle to inclusive governance and sustainable national development. Despite numerous policy frameworks, including the National Gender Policy and the 35% Affirmative Action, practical implementation continues to lag due to entrenched patriarchal norms, political violence, economic exclusion, and institutional weaknesses. The persistent underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes undermines policy diversity, democratic consolidation, and equitable development outcomes. Bridging this gap requires not just policy reform but also a transformative cultural shift that values competence over gender. A deliberate

investment in women's political education, empowerment, and protection from political intimidation is essential. Only through a genuine commitment to gender inclusivity can Nigeria build a truly participatory democracy that harnesses the full potential of its population for national progress and sustainable development.

Recommendations

Promoting gender balance in Nigeria's political system requires more than policy declarations; it demands deliberate, coordinated, and sustainable actions at institutional, societal, and individual levels. The following recommendations aim to strengthen gender inclusivity, enhance women's political representation, and ensure equitable participation in governance.

1. ***Strengthen Enforcement of Gender Policies:*** The Federal Government should ensure strict implementation of the National Gender Policy and the 35% Affirmative Action across all levels of governance. Legislative mechanisms should be established to make gender representation legally enforceable rather than optional, ensuring compliance by political parties and public institutions.
2. ***Promote Political Education and Capacity Building for Women:*** Continuous education and mentorship programs should be introduced to build the leadership capacity of women, especially at the grassroots. Political awareness campaigns must target rural areas to dismantle long-standing cultural barriers and empower women to participate confidently in electoral processes.
3. ***Enhance Economic Empowerment Initiatives:*** Economic programs that provide women with access to credit facilities, business grants, and financial literacy training should be expanded. This will enable aspiring female politicians to overcome funding barriers and compete effectively with their male counterparts in political contests.
4. ***Ensure Security and Protection for Female Politicians:*** Electoral and security agencies must provide protection for women during campaigns and elections. Political parties should also institute internal policies against gender-based violence and harassment to create safer spaces for women in political participation.
5. ***Institutionalize Gender Mainstreaming in Political Parties:*** Political parties should integrate gender inclusion into their constitutions and operational structures. Party leadership positions should reflect gender balance, and internal democracy should be strengthened to support women candidates during primaries and general elections.
6. ***Engage Traditional and Religious Leaders in Advocacy:*** Since cultural and religious beliefs strongly influence gender norms in Nigeria, traditional and faith-based leaders should be mobilized to advocate for women's inclusion. Their influence can help reshape societal perceptions and promote acceptance of women in leadership roles.
7. ***Establish Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks:*** A national monitoring body should be set up to track progress in gender representation and hold institutions

accountable. Data on women's participation at federal, state, and local government levels should be periodically published to ensure transparency and policy feedback.

8. ***Encourage Media Advocacy for Gender Equity:*** The media should play an active role in promoting positive images of women leaders and exposing gender discrimination in politics. Balanced media coverage can change public attitudes and inspire young women to pursue leadership roles.

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CHAPTER SIXTY-NINE

INTERNAL TERRORISM AND ETHNIC MILITANCY: CHALLENGES TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Developing countries are generally characterized by political instabilities that tend to cripple development. Changes in leadership structures seem not to help as the situations and experiences remain threats to national unity and development. This perhaps reflects the position of Dandak (2025) that "What is striking in Nigerian politics is not what has changed, but what has remained the same." This observation remains profoundly relevant to contemporary Nigeria, particularly in relation to the country's persistent and deepening national security challenges. Despite the transition from prolonged military rule to democratic governance in 1999, Nigeria's security landscape has continued to deteriorate, revealing enduring structural weaknesses in governance, political accountability, and social cohesion.

Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has witnessed recurrent and increasingly multifaceted security crises. Early in the Fourth Republic, violent incidents such as the Odi crisis and the Jos ethno-religious conflicts highlighted the fragility of Nigeria's social order (Ibeanu, 2014). These early episodes were followed by rampant electoral violence during the 2003, 2007, 2011, and more recent elections, as political elites have continued to manipulate vulnerable youths for political gain (Adebayo & Umejesi, 2020; Maiangwa et al., 2017). In many cases, unemployed and socio-economically marginalized young men were mobilized, armed, and financed to serve as political thugs or electoral enforcers, only to be abandoned once electoral contests were concluded. Research shows that such politically sponsored networks have often evolved into entrenched criminal groups, fueling cycles of violence, banditry, and other forms of insecurity (Aghedo & Osumah, 2015; Umejesi et al., 2022). For example, local studies document how organized youth gangs associated with political elites have become part of the broader security challenge in states across Nigeria, contributing to kidnappings, cult violence, and clashes with security forces (Adebayo & Umejesi, 2020; Umejesi et al., 2022). These dynamics underscore the enduring interplay between political competition,

elite manipulation of youth, and the expansion of violent non-state actors in Nigeria's evolving security landscape.

Over time, these practices have contributed to the proliferation of armed groups, criminal networks, and violent non-state actors across Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2020; Global Terrorism Index, 2023). Today, the country faces a multiplicity of security threats including ethno-religious conflicts, separatist agitations, ethnic militancy, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping for ransom, cultism, armed robbery, cybercrime, illegal oil bunkering, cross-border criminal activities, and communal and boundary disputes (Nigeria Security Tracker, 2024; UNODC, 2022). The persistence of extremist groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the North-East, armed banditry in the North-West and North-Central regions, and separatist movements in the South-East have further intensified Nigeria's security crisis and overstretched state security institutions (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2023; International Crisis Group, 2021).

The unrestrained struggle for political power, alongside the inability of successive governments to deliver democratic dividends since 1999, has fueled widespread disillusionment and violent contestations across the country (Ake, 2001; Suberu, 2007). Core principles of good governance accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, and equity which confer legitimacy on the state, have often been undermined by corruption, impunity, and elite domination (World Bank, 2021; Transparency International, 2023). Consequently, public trust in state institutions has continued to decline, creating fertile ground for violent mobilization and criminal entrepreneurship (OECD, 2018).

Rising frustration over the state's failure to provide basic social services, ensure economic opportunities, and guarantee personal safety has aggravated insecurity (UNDP, 2023). Persistent poverty, mass youth unemployment, inequality, and declining living standards are widely identified as underlying drivers of violence and radicalization in Nigeria (World Bank, 2022; UNDP, 2023). Large segments of the population, particularly young people, increasingly perceive violence as a means of survival, resistance, or expression of grievances against perceived injustice and exclusion (Gurr, 1970, International Crisis Group, 2020).

The frequency and intensity of violent conflicts in Nigeria have drawn international concern, with the country often ranked among the most insecurity-affected states globally (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2023). Nigeria's security challenges are deeply rooted in flawed political processes, ethnic and religious polarization, leadership deficits, systemic corruption, and declining confidence in the state's capacity to protect lives and livelihoods (Obi, 2010; Suberu, 2007). National security encompassing the protection of sovereignty, social order, and human security remains a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development and economic well-being (UNDP, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Relative Deprivation Theory, principally associated with Ted Robert Gurr (1970), who argued that perceived discrepancies between expected and actual socio-economic conditions generate frustration that can lead to collective violence. The sociological foundations of the theory were earlier developed by Walter G. Runciman (1966), who emphasized group-based comparisons as drivers of social unrest.

Contemporary scholars argue that groups often resort to rebellion and violence not necessarily because of absolute deprivation, but because of perceived injustice arising from unmet expectations in comparison with others (Gurr, 1970; Hill & Østby, 2023).

Relative Deprivation Theory posits that violence is most likely to occur when there is a widening gap between value expectations; the social, economic and political conditions people believe they are entitled to and value capabilities, or their actual ability to attain those conditions. When expectations rise faster than opportunities, frustration develops, which may escalate into anger and collective aggression if sustained over time and shared within a group (Buhaug,Cederman & Gleditsch 2013, Gurr, 1970). Recent studies emphasize that it is the perception of exclusion and unfairness, rather than material poverty alone that fuels violent mobilization.

Building on this perspective, modern conflict literature highlights how structural constraints such as political marginalization, unemployment, corruption, and unequal resource distribution intensify feelings of deprivation and grievance (Hill & Østby, 2023). When state institutions are perceived as unresponsive or unjust, accumulated frustration is often redirected toward the state or dominant social groups, resulting in aggressive and violent actions.

Within the Nigerian context, Relative Deprivation Theory provides a compelling explanatory framework for understanding the rise of ethnic militancy, separatist agitations, armed banditry, and internal terrorism. Persistent poverty, mass youth unemployment, regional inequality, governance deficits, and political exclusion have widened the gap between citizens' expectations and their lived realities. Empirical studies on Nigeria demonstrate that these conditions generate grievances that are exploited by militant and terrorist organizations, making relative deprivation a central factor in the country's contemporary security challenges (Adesina, 2024; Nwankwo et al., 2024).

National Security

Security is broadly understood as the condition of being protected from threats that endanger cherished values, the survival of individuals, groups, and societies, and the stability of political and social systems. Traditionally, security focused on the protection of territory and political sovereignty from external military threats. However, contemporary scholarship recognizes that security goes beyond the absence of war to include protection from economic hardship, social instability, environmental degradation, crime, and other non-military threats that

undermine human and state well-being (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013, as cited in Okoli, 2017).

In modern discourse, national security is defined as the capacity of a state to preserve its sovereignty, protect its citizens and institutions, maintain social order, and foster conditions for sustainable development and wellbeing. This broader conception includes economic stability, political governance, social cohesion, environmental resilience, and protection from both internal and external threats (NTF21, 2022). Within the Nigerian context, national security also implies safeguarding the state against persistent insurgencies, terrorism, banditry, inter-communal violence, and other complex non-state actors that pose multidimensional risks to peace and development (Adesina, 2024).

Contemporary scholars emphasize that security must centre on human beings as referent objects, not just the state, a perspective known as human security. This approach foregrounds protection from pervasive threats to individuals' rights, livelihoods, and dignity, and highlights the importance of addressing underlying socio-economic and political drivers of insecurity (George & Hilal, 2013, Hubert, 2001). In Nigeria, such an expanded understanding is critical given that poverty, unemployment, corruption, and governance deficits contribute significantly to insecurity and violent conflict (Okolie, 2024).Thus, national security in the contemporary Nigerian context entails protecting the state's territorial integrity, democratic institutions, and citizens' welfare, while pursuing economic equity, social justice, and resilience against both traditional and emerging security threats. This multidimensional framework recognizes that effective security must integrate military capabilities with political, economic, and human-centred strategies.

The Nigerian State and National Security

Individuals and groups are most likely to resort to aggression when subjected to sustained and perceived unjust deprivation and the potential for collective violence increases with the intensity and breadth of relative deprivation within a community (Gurr, 1970; Hill & Østby, 2023). In the Nigerian context, rebellion or violent agitation against the state is often triggered when citizens perceive a significant gap between what they expect from government and what they actually receive. Violence thus becomes a tool through which groups attempt to draw attention to unmet needs and suppressed aspirations, especially when peaceful avenues for redress are absent or ineffective (Abah, 2025; Nwankwo et al., 2024).

Historically, this dynamic explains much of the insecurity in Nigeria, including armed insurrections by Niger Delta militants against the state and multinational oil companies, widespread armed robbery, kidnapping, crude oil theft, sea piracy, child trafficking, and the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East. These acts reflect the cumulative frustration of Nigerians arising from inadequate

governance, extreme poverty, mass unemployment, and underdeveloped infrastructure including electricity, roads, health, and educational facilities which undermine citizens' quality of life and fuel grievances (Adesina, 2024; Nwankwo et al., 2024).

Relative Deprivation Theory highlights that the failure of the Nigerian state to address these structural inequalities and protect the lives and property of its citizens generates widespread tension, which can escalate into violence (Buhaug,Cederman & Gleditsch 2013, Gurr, 1970). While individual tolerance and contextual factors mediate responses to frustration, it is clear that persistent socio-economic and political deprivation has contributed to the recurring cycles of militancy, insurgency, and social unrest in Nigeria (Abah, 2025, Hill & Østby, 2023). Thus, the abysmal failure of the Nigerian state to fulfill its constitutional and developmental responsibilities remains a central driver of the country's contemporary security challenges.

Niger Delta Militancy and Nigeria's National Security

Since the end of the Nigerian Civil War, parts of the Niger Delta have experienced recurring cycles of violence driven by socio-economic exclusion, environmental degradation, and political marginalization. Over time, the failure of successive governments to address these structural inequalities has created conditions in which violence became not merely a means of survival but also a tool for articulating grievances (Ibeanu, 2014; Okonta & Douglas, 2021). As a result, activities once considered criminal including armed robbery, smuggling, and illicit oil related ventures have periodically gained traction as alternative sources of livelihood and resistance against what many residents of the Niger Delta perceive as persistent state neglect.

The emergence of groups such as the Ijaw National Congress, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta Volunteer Force, and the Egbesu Boys reflects the broader failure of the Nigerian political system to respond meaningfully to demands for economic justice, environmental restoration, and political inclusion (Idemudia, 2020). These movements initially rooted in legitimate protests against resource inequality and environmental harm, later evolved into armed militancy, contributing to insecurity and economic losses in the region.

The Niger Delta has been a major source of Nigeria's oil revenue since production began in the 1950s, yet development indicators in the region remain extremely low. Infrastructural deficits, limited access to electricity, poor transportation networks, and widespread environmental contamination continue to undermine local livelihoods (Okonta & Douglas, 2021; Watts, 2018). The death of prominent Ogoni leader Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other environmental activists

under the military regime in 1995 drew global attention to these injustices and highlighted the risks of state repression (Watts, 2018).

The persistent perception that oil wealth from the Niger Delta is disproportionately allocated to other regions, while local communities suffer poverty and ecological devastation, has fuelled sustained agitation for resource control and equitable development (Ibeanu, 2014). The 2009 amnesty programme introduced by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua provided a temporary reduction in violence by offering vocational training, education, and reintegration support to ex-militants, although challenges in implementation have limited long-term impact (Alao & Omeni, 2016; Obi, 2024).

Despite the relative calm in recent years, sporadic pipeline vandalism, illegal bunkering, kidnapping, and attacks on oil infrastructure have persisted, illustrating the fragility of peace and the depth of unresolved grievances in the region (Obi, 2024). The continued threat posed by Niger Delta militancy underscores the need for comprehensive development strategies that address both economic and human security dimensions, rather than isolated military or amnesty interventions.

Boko Haram Violence and Nigeria's National Security

Boko Haram, an Islamist extremist group officially founded in 2002 and becoming widely recognized in 2009, operates primarily in Nigeria's North-East. The group has conducted deadly attacks, kidnappings, and bombings, resulting in thousands of deaths, the destruction of property, and massive displacement of civilians (Agbiboa, 2021, Onuoha, 2014). Their high-profile attacks, such as the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls in 2014, targeted churches, schools, motor parks, and government facilities, demonstrating their capacity to challenge the Nigerian state and generate international concern (Okoli & Onuoha, 2020).

Boko Haram's ideology, also known as *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lid Da'awati wal-Jihad*, seeks to establish strict Sharia law in Nigeria, prohibiting Western education and interactions with non-Islamic institutions. While initially a religiously oriented group, Boko Haram's operations have expanded to include terrorism and organized criminal activity (Zenn, 2018; Onuoha, 2020). Scholars emphasize that socio-economic marginalization, political exclusion, unemployment, and regional inequalities, rather than purely religious motivations, are key drivers of the insurgency (Aghedo & Osumah, 2019; Umejesi et al., 2022).

The group's violent campaigns, including suicide bombings, kidnappings, and attacks on military and civilian targets, have destabilized the North-East, leaving hundreds of thousands internally displaced and undermining Nigeria's socio-economic development (ICG, 2021; Umejesi et al., 2022). Boko Haram's alignment with transnational terrorist networks, including the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), has provided access to sophisticated weapons and funding, enhancing their operational capacity (Onuoha, 2020, Zenn, 2020).

The Nigerian government has responded with military interventions, including declaring states of emergency in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa in 2013, and

initiating dialogue and amnesty programmes for defectors. However, Boko Haram's resilience, organizational fragmentation, and continued ideological appeal to marginalized youths pose ongoing challenges to national security (Agbiboa, 2021; Okoli & Onuoha, 2020).

Boko Haram's insurgency has heightened inter-religious tensions, disrupted governance, and threatened national cohesion. Analysts argue that a multidimensional approach combining security measures with socio-economic development, political inclusion, and counter-radicalization strategies is essential to mitigate the long-term threat posed by the group (Aghedo & Osumah, 2019; ICG, 2021).

The Niger Delta Crisis and Boko Haram Insurgency

For several decades, the perceived neglect and marginalization of the Niger Delta region by the Nigerian state has dominated national and international discourse. Despite accounting for over 80–90% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings through crude oil production, the region has remained grossly underdeveloped, characterized by poor infrastructure, environmental degradation, and widespread poverty (Watts, 2015; Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2016). This contradiction between resource abundance and underdevelopment generated deep-seated frustration among local communities, particularly youths, leading to militancy, pipeline vandalism, kidnapping for ransom, illegal oil bunkering, and violent confrontations with state security forces and multinational oil corporations.

The earliest organized resistance in the Niger Delta can be traced to the armed struggle led by Isaac Adaka Boro in 1966. Boro's agitation for self-determination, resource control, and political autonomy reflected early expressions of relative deprivation rooted in economic and political exclusion (Osaghae, 2017). Although the revolt was suppressed, it laid the foundation for subsequent movements and militant organizations, including the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Egbesu Boys, and later groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists in 1995 under the Abacha regime further radicalized the struggle and intensified militancy across the region (Watts, 2015). The crisis persisted until the 2009 Presidential Amnesty Programme, which temporarily reduced violence but failed to address the structural causes of deprivation (Aghedo & Osumah, 2015).

Similarly, the Boko Haram insurgency in North-East Nigeria is deeply rooted in socio-economic deprivation, political exclusion, youth unemployment, and governance failure. Scholars argue that political elites' manipulation and subsequent abandonment of vulnerable youths after electoral cycles contributed significantly to the emergence of extremist movements (Onuoha, 2014; Maiangwa et al., 2017). Founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002, Boko Haram initially emerged as a non-violent religious movement protesting corruption, inequality, and state injustice.

However, the extrajudicial killing of Yusuf in 2009 marked a turning point, transforming the group into a violent insurgency with transnational terrorist links (Zenn, 2020).

Since then, Boko Haram has carried out high-profile attacks, including the bombing of the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters and the United Nations building in Abuja in 2011, alongside mass abductions, attacks on schools, churches, markets, and security formations. These developments have raised fundamental questions about Nigeria's capacity to secure lives and property, manage internal security threats, and ensure effective governance (Botha & Abdile, 2019). In both the Niger Delta and North-East Nigeria, persistent relative deprivation, state fragility, and elite failure remain central drivers of violent conflict and national insecurity.

Ethnic and Religious Crises and Nigeria's National Security

Since the end of the Cold War, ethnic and religious crises have emerged as major threats to national and global peace. In Nigeria, these crises often arise when different groups compete for political recognition, access to power, and control over natural and economic resources (Agbiboa, 2018; International Crisis Group [ICG], 2021). The country's diversity encompassing Christianity, Islam, and traditional religions has, at times, exacerbated tensions, as differences in faith and religious interpretation fuel conflicts and undermine the secular principles of the state (Adebayo & Umejesi, 2020).

Religious violence has been particularly severe in northern Nigeria. Beyond the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency, historical clashes between Muslims and Christians have resulted in thousands of deaths and the displacement of tens of thousands of citizens (Agbiboa, 2021; Onuoha, 2014). For example, ethno-religious riots in Maiduguri, Bauchi, and Potiskum in 2009 led to approximately 1,000 fatalities, while the 2010 Jos clashes claimed nearly 1,000 lives (Anyadike, 2013; ICG, 2021). Incidents such as the December 25, 2011 bombings at the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Church in Jos and St. Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla, near Abuja, further illustrate the persistent threat posed by religious extremism (BBC News, 2011; ICG, 2014; Onuoha, 2020).

Frustration arising from government failure to provide basic social services including education, healthcare, employment, and infrastructure has been a recurring driver of both religious and ethnic conflict (Agbiboa, 2018; ICG, 2021). Poverty and unemployment, affecting a significant portion of the population, have intensified grievances, creating fertile ground for violence (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2020).

Ethnic crises similarly continue to challenge national cohesion. Competition for political offices and control over resources has triggered numerous violent confrontations, including conflicts between cattle rearers and farmers in Shagamu, the Ife-Modakeke dispute in Osun State, the Aguleri-Umuleri boundary dispute in

Anambra, the Odi crisis in Bayelsa, communal violence in Jos, and recurrent Niger Delta conflicts (Adebayo & Umejesi, 2020; Nnoli, 2018). These crises illustrate the persistent struggles among Nigeria's ethnic groups for access to economic and political power, often at the expense of national security.

Overall, the interplay between ethnic marginalization, religious intolerance, and socio-economic deprivation underscores the multifaceted nature of insecurity in Nigeria. Addressing these crises requires a comprehensive approach that integrates equitable governance, social inclusion, poverty alleviation, and conflict-sensitive policies.

Overview of Insecurity in South-East and South-West Nigeria and Implications for National Security

Insecurity in Nigeria's South-East and South-West regions has become a major concern for national stability, economic development, and state authority. Although historically more stable than the North-East insurgency zone, these regions have in recent years experienced rising violent activities that pose significant threats to national security.

Insecurity in the South-East

The South-East has witnessed increasing violence linked to secessionist agitations, particularly associated with the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN). The region has recorded attacks on security agencies and government facilities, killings of police officers and destruction of police stations, enforcement of "sit-at-home" orders disrupting economic activities and targeted assassinations of political figures and traditional leaders. These developments reflect deep-seated grievances relating to political marginalization, economic neglect, and perceived injustice, which have evolved into violent resistance and criminal opportunism. The weakening of state presence and frequent confrontations between security forces and armed groups have undermined governance and public trust, posing serious challenges to internal security and national cohesion (International Crisis Group, 2021; SBM Intelligence, 2023).

Insecurity in the South-West

The South-West, Nigeria's economic hub, has experienced growing insecurity characterized by kidnapping for ransom along highways and in rural communities, farmer–herder conflicts and communal clashes, Banditry and organized crime networks and vigilante mobilization and the creation of regional security outfits (e.g., Amotekun Corps)

Rapid urbanization, youth unemployment, porous borders, and migration of criminal networks from other regions have intensified security threats. While not driven by separatist conflict like the South-East, insecurity in the South-West

disrupts trade, transportation, and investment, threatening national economic security (Akinola, 2020; Nigeria Security Tracker, 2024).

The implications of insecurity in both the South-East and South-West regions have significant consequences for Nigeria's national security. Repeated attacks on security institutions erode state authority by weakening the legitimacy and operational capacity of the government to maintain law and order. Instability in these regions also disrupts economic activities, particularly as the South-West hosts major industries, commercial centers, and ports, while the South-East serves as an important trading hub, thereby affecting national revenue generation. The increased deployment of security forces in response to violence contributes to the militarization of civil spaces, often raising human rights concerns and deepening public distrust of the state. In addition, the spread of secessionist narratives and identity-based mobilization poses a direct challenge to Nigeria's territorial integrity and national unity. The proliferation of small arms among armed non-state actors further fuels violence and criminality across regions. Thus, insecurity in these areas extends beyond local disturbances and constitutes a strategic national security challenge requiring political dialogue, economic inclusion, and strengthened community-based security mechanisms (International Crisis Group, 2021; Obi, 2022).

Conclusion

The prevailing security challenges confronting contemporary Nigeria underscore the urgent need for proactive and comprehensive government intervention at all levels. Addressing these challenges requires going beyond reactive security measures to identifying and tackling their root causes, including socio-economic deprivation, political exclusion, poor governance, and elite manipulation of ethnic and religious identities.

A sustainable remedy to Nigeria's security crisis lies in the federal government's commitment to strengthening the capacity of security agencies through the provision of adequate equipment, improved welfare packages, and continuous professional training. Such measures are essential to motivate security personnel to perform their duties with diligence, courage, professionalism, and impartiality. Equally important is the need to discourage political actors from exploiting religion and ethnicity for narrow political gains, as such practices undermine national cohesion and elevate sectional interests above the collective national interest.

Furthermore, as the custodian of Nigeria's security architecture, the federal government must demonstrate political will by ensuring that perpetrators of ethnic, religious, and other forms of violent crimes are promptly investigated and prosecuted. Ending the culture of impunity will not only serve as a deterrent to future violence but also restore public confidence in the state's capacity to protect lives and property. Ultimately, only a holistic approach that combines effective

security governance, inclusive politics, and accountability can guarantee lasting peace and national security in Nigeria.

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CHAPTER SEVENTY

TWO MODES OF LEADERSHIP APPLICATION TO LIBRARY OPERATION A CORRELATE TO EFFECTIVE INFORMATION SERVICES DELIVERY IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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Introduction

College of Education libraries are academic libraries that employ's librarians and non-librarians (library staff) to accomplish efficient information services delivery. In support of this, Akinyemi and Ifijeh (2013), asserted that for libraries to achieve their objectives, they require human resource of various cadres. Tise, (2017) noted that libraries have staff who package information in many formats that are easily adopted by information seekers. The library staff are librarians and non-librarians, who use their talents and abilities to work for efficient and effective information services delivery.

Ferdinand and Bibian, (2012) elaborated that library is a collection of written, printed and other graphic materials including films, slides, phonograph records, tapes etc. housed in organized order, and interpreted to meet broad and varying needs of users for information, knowledge, recreation and aesthetic enjoyment. Library is the collection of information materials that are select, acquire, organized, store / preserve and disseminate to users in the right format and in the right time. It would also be observed that books alone do not form the content of a library, the books must be arranged, and the library must meet the information needs of the users it is meant to serve. Thus, library is the collection of books, book related and non-book materials, that is made available for users in the right format, right proportion and at the right time, to the right person. There are different types of libraries, such as academic library, public library, school library, national library, special library and private library. Emeka (2018). For this study, academic library will be discussed, which is the library attached to tertiary institution like college of education, university and polytechnic, this libraries are always headed by a librarian.

A librarian is a person who is in charge of a library or has been professionally trained to work in a library or any information centre. They are in charge of or work professionally in library and are responsible for management and services (LSIT, 2021). Librarians in Nigeria are considered certified and suitable to be called a

qualified librarian after certification by the Regulatory body known as, Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria. According to the Act establishing Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) (Decree No. 12 of 1995) "certified Librarians are librarians who have the requisite qualification approved by the body of practice librarianship in Nigeria". They are librarians who possess a minimum qualification of Bachelor of library and information science degree or non-library and information science plus a post graduate diploma, masters and doctoral degree in library and information science.

One significance factor that keeps resounding in the effort to for adequate library services delivery by library staff in an academic environment is how the leadership of college libraries delegate authority. Leadership is a mandatory interpersonal skill for managerial positions. Leadership has been a topic of controversial argument since the time of ancient philosophers. Today, leadership is the basis for all libraries. Leadership is a towering calling and task, upon which the library rests. Leadership plays a fundamental role in the success or failure of libraries (Chow & Rich, 2013).

The concept of leadership is a fascinating one. It is seen as a dominating factor in an organization or group in motivating staff or people to perform toward goal setting and goal achieving (Akilaya, 2011). Leadership is to be the process of directing and influencing the task -relating activities of group members. Different leadership styles have different effects on staff. Nwanokor, (2022), viewed leadership styles, as a techniques and manner of relationship between the leader and the subordinates, He further said that it is the method which the leader adopts to direct the followers in the process of guiding them towards the attainment of set goals, and stated the example as autocratic/ authoritarian leadership style, democratic/participative leadership style, pseudo democratic leadership style, laissez faire leadership style. Some researchers identified some leadership style such as; autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic, participative, charismatic, situational, transactional, transformational, laissez-faire, and facilitative leadership styles. (Germano, 2020; Kham, Kham and Ismail, 2015; Ojo (as cited in Opaleke, 2012). But this study focused on the transformational leadership styles, and democratic leadership style, will be used to determine how it aid delivery of information services to meet information needs of users.

Information services is an act to process, store, and disseminate information as recorded in various media of books and non-book materials. Items of information are essential commodities which enable people update their knowledge and keep abreast of current trends. Locating information in the libraries is facilitated through the use of index; catalogue, bibliographies, abstracts, etc prepared and made available by the libraries. It can also be obtained from the current awareness services and the Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) programme of the libraries (Ferdinand, A.E & Bibian, O.M, 2012). From the above,

effective information services delivery, can be determine via different medium, to meet the goal of both the institution and the library itself.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain two leadership application to library operation as correlate of effective information services delivery in colleges of education libraries in south-south Nigeria

Specifically, the study also determines the:

1. Relationship between transformational leadership style and information services delivery in colleges of education libraries in South- South Nigeria.
2. Relationship between democratic leadership style and information services delivery in colleges of education libraries in South- South Nigeria.
3. Relationship between transformational leadership style, democratic leadership style and information services delivery in colleges of education libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between transformational leadership style and information services delivery in colleges of education libraries in South-South Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between democratic leadership style and information services delivery in colleges of education libraries in South-South Nigeria?
3. What is the between transformational leadership style, democratic leadership style and information services delivery in colleges of education libraries in South-South Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

College library is an academic libraries established in tertiary institutions as Colleges of Education. He further stated that the roles of these libraries are to effectively support institutions to attain the key functions of teaching, learning, research and community services. These institutions are responsible for the production of middle and high-level manpower for national transformation and development of basic education. The extent to which they are able to accomplish that task depends largely on how well their libraries are equipped with the relevant information resources. According to Ogunshola, (2014), academic libraries exist to package information for different educational exploits to different groups and this can only be achieved with the aid of adequate delegation of authority by the leadership of the library. (Emeka, 2018)

Leadership is about influence, the ability to influence your subordinate, your bosses in a work or organizational context (Yukl, 2016). Without influence, it is impossible to be a leader. Leadership requires skill to exhibit desired influence. In line with this, Chidi and Segun (2015) asserted leadership can be seen as the skill or ability to steer people positively or negatively toward the actualization or

achievement of a set of goals and objectives. When the leadership in academic libraries in Southern Nigeria steers libraries positively, they will feel happy and this will enable them to be involved in their jobs. On the other hand, when those in leadership steer library staff negatively, counter-productive work will occur. According to Vigoda-Gadot (2017), leadership is a behavior that gives purpose and meaning. The leadership must be an effective one to give meaning to an organization.

Leadership is the key trust that comes from the respect of others (Mintzberg, 2020). Trust is foundation on which leadership stands. Trust affects a leader's impact and the organization more than any other single thing. Leaders who inspire trust get better outcomes, morale, retention, innovation and loyalty, and revenue while mistrust fosters disbelief, frustration and turnover (Horsager, 2012). When both leaders and subordinate trust each other, it is easier for them to work in harmony. Will be peaceful. Trust also affect the various organizational behavior concept such as motivation, team management, learning and communication. If there is mutual trust between the leaders and the employees, they will be communication. If there is mutual between the leader and the employees, they will be motivated to do their job in high spirit along with an overall enhancement of learning and communication skill. Relationship in the team will also improve, thereby giving better result for the organization. Trust begets trust (Robbins, Judge, Millet, & Waters-Marsh, 2018), though it takes time to be achieved, it must be earned considering its contribution to position outcome in all organizations. Trustworthiness is often the key position of leadership as trust is fundamental to manner of organized human groups, weather in education, business, the military, religion government, or international organizations (Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson, 2017)."

Democratic leaders recognize their subordinates and consult with them on proposed actions/decision and also implore them to participation (Ukaidi, 2015; Onah, 2017). Democratic leadership pattern is characterized by the sharing of opinion in a typical parliamentary style. Leaders try to promote compromise in arguments and seek consensus in decisions. The style enables the leader to gain acceptance of the objective of the organization but could be time consuming and costly on the short run. This leadership style also gives freedom to members in choosing whoever they want to work with thereby promoting commitment and allowing individuals to realize their needs for participation in decision making. Akilaya. (2011), pointed that democratic leadership rests on the following premises: That people's basic needs, rights and freedom must be guaranteed and reported by the organization; That power and authority must be derived from the governed; That decision about organizational matters should be arrived at after making necessary consultations and communications with the various sections of the organization. Democratic leadership is based on popular election of the leader or on an able and qualified person being appointed through an established procedure to

the position of authority. Also, democratic leader team with the subordinate to make decision and communicates every step taken in the process of goal achievement with subordinates (Nwanokor, 2022). Democratic /Participatory Leadership Style teams the subordinates to make decisions and communicates every step taken in the process of goal achievement with subordinates. The leader acts always in consultation with the subordinates and the subordinates willingly cooperate with the leader to give in their best without fear of reprisal.

Transformational leadership Style is interested in achieving organizational goal as well as individual goals. The leader does not compromise one for the other. Though this is act of discretion, the leader is able to blend the group and organizational needs to carry the followers along and motivate them towards accomplishing tasks and meeting deadlines. Ahamdi, Ahamdi and Zohrabi (2012) described transformational leaders as those who inspire and encourage staff to achieve beyond expected goals and make them view the organizational goals as their own goals. Transformational leadership encourages changes which is essential in libraries due to opportunities created by Information and Communication Technology, in which varied information dissemination outfits are competing with libraries. Rehman, Shareef, Mohmood and Ishaque (2020) pointed that organization need leaders that have the capabilities for inspiring, motivating and encouraging staff towards toward the complex goal of the organization. Transformational leadership has the above attribute and is much more interested in changing organization and the employees for the accomplishment of goals. It is a choice leadership style due to its benefits in human development for sustainability and progress of the libraries.

Information services entails the collection, evaluation and organized dissemination of scientific and technical information. It's also the offering of capability for generating, acquiring, storing, transferring, processing, retrieving, utilize or making available information via telecommunications, and includes electronic publishing, but does not include any use of such capability for the management. Information services refers to the systematic provision and management of data, knowledge and resource essential for decision-making, problem-solving, and enhancing productivity. It is also the systematic collection, organization, processing and dissemination of information to meet the specific needs of users. Information services aimed to provide relevant, accurate, and timely information that supports decision-making, problem-solving, research, and learning. These services are offered through various channels, include libraries, digital platform, research institutions, and many other. (Ashikuzzaman, 2025)

Method

A correlational design was used for this study. Aaccording to Nworgu (2015), a correlational design defines the kind of relationship that exit between or among one or more variable. Such study is only interested in describing certain variables in

relation to population. A correlational research design investigate relationship between variable without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them. A correlation reflects the strength and /or direction of the relationship between two (or more) variables. The direction of a correlation can be either positive or negative. The correlational design was used because this study investigated the two leadership application to library operation as correlate of information services delivery in college of education libraries in South-South Nigeria and did not involve the manipulation of variables.

This study was conducted in south-south, Nigeria. The population of this study consist of two-hundred and eleven (211) library staff from the ten government owned colleges of education libraries in South-South Nigeria. The researcher adopted the entire population of 211 as the study sample size, and used census method since the population size was manageable and accessible. The justification for choosing professionals library staff, which are the librarians, para-professional (library officers), and other staff of the library (library assistance, library attendants and technicians) for this study is because they are directly the one carrying out all the activities in the library and their direct involvement in the present study, which gave accurate information that created a better understanding of the true picture, situation and exposure of the position of services delivered in colleges of education libraries in South-South Nigeria.

211 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents by the researchers with the help of ten research assistants, one in each College of Education Library, on a face to face direct contact. Data collected from the field were analyzed using Pearson (r) Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient to answer the research questions, Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences (SSPSS) was used to ascertain the accuracy of the analysis for research question.

Results

The results are presented according to the research questions.

Research Question 1.

What is the relationship between transformational leadership and information services delivery in college of education libraries in South-South Nigeria.?

Table 1: Pearson r on the relationship between transformational leadership and information services delivery in college of education libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Sources of Variation	N	R	P-Value		Remark
Transformational Leadership Style Positive Relationship and information services delivery	211	-0.18	1.00		Average

Table 1 indicates that there was an average positive relationship (0.55) between transformational leadership and information services delivery in college of education libraries South-South Nigeria

Research question 2

What is the relationship between democratic leadership and information services delivery in college of education libraries in South-South Nigeria?

Table 2 Pearson r on the relationship between democratic leadership and information services delivery in college of education libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Sources of Variation	N	R	P-Value	Remark
Democratic Leadership Style and information services delivery	211	0.65	0.04	Positive Relationship

Table 2. Revealed that there was a positive relationship (0.65) between democratic leadership and information services delivery in college of education libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Research question 3

What is the relationship between transformational leadership style, democratic leadership style of librarians and information services delivery in college of education libraries in South-South Nigeria?

Table 3: Pearson r on the relationship between a transactional leadership, democratic leadership and information services delivery in college of education libraries in South-South Nigeria

Sources of Variation	N	R	P-Value	Remark
Transactional Leadership, democratic leadership Relationship and information services delivery	211	0.60	1.00	Positive

Table 3. Revealed, that there was a moderate positive relationship (0.60) between transactional leadership, democratic leadership and information services delivery in college of education libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that there is an average positive relationship between transformational leadership style of librarians, and information services delivery. This relationship is significant. It indicates that when librarians are using transformational leadership style their services are moderate in relation to their information delivery. This finding is consistent with the finding from studies carried previously by scholars (Javeed and Farooqi 2012, Sheikh et.al. 2012). These researchers in their different studies reported that transformational leadership styles have significant relationship to information services delivery that bring about moderate service delivery in the library. Transformational leadership style propels subordinates to go farther than personal interests and move nearer to the library interest (Yuki, 2013). Desyatrikov (2010),

Also, the findings of the study revealed that there is a moderate relationship between the democratic leadership style of librarians, and information

services delivery. This relationship is significant. It indicates that when librarians are using democratic leadership style, there is increases on a very high rate which bring about effective information services delivery. This finding is consistent with the finding from studies carried previously by Nazem and Mozaini, (2014),

Also, the findings of the study revealed that there is a moderate positive relationship between the transformational leadership style, democratic leadership style of librarians, and information service delivery. This relationship is significant. It indicates that when librarians are using both transformational leadership style and democratic leadership style, there will be increases on the information services delivery, reflecting effectiveness in information delivery to users. This finding is consistent with the finding from studies carried previously by Ukaidi, (2015), reported that the combination of leadership styles have significant relationship to information services delivery in libraries because the staff are satisfied and happy.

Conclusion

The main aspect of this study was to determine two leadership application to library operation a correlate to effective information services delivery in college of education libraries. Hence, the findings of the study suggested that librarians' use of transformational and democratic leadership style might increase information service delivery to users of college of education libraries in South-South Nigeria and so positively affect the attainment of the goals of these libraries. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Librarians should be exposed to different leadership styles, which they will adopt and use for guiding and supervising staff under them for effective service delivery. This should be achieved through inclusion of leadership courses in the curriculum for up-coming librarians, leadership training for librarians that are already in the fields, which would be achieve through professional seminar, workshops, conferences, and short-term courses.
2. There is need for the management should provide adequate information resources for effective service delivery to meet the goal of the library and the institution.
3. There should be an improvement in library leadership that may lead corresponding improvement within the library to facilitate library services, in order to encourage users.

Implication of the study

The study has provided empirical evidence as regards two Leadership Application to Library Operation a Correlate to Effective Information Services Delivery in Colleges of Education Libraries in South-South Nigeria. The result showed that the two leadership styles transformational and democratic are used, and encourages effective information services delivery to users, that meet the

information needs of users and also meet the goals of both the parent organization and the library its' self.

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CHAPTER SEVENTY-ONE

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS IN VISUAL ART EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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Introduction

Leadership in higher education contextualizes how decisions are made, strategies are enacted, and academic environments evolve. In visual art education, leadership does not only guide administrative processes but also shapes creative learning environments, institutional identity, and the integration of contemporary artistic practices with academic structures (Berger, 2024; Shawa, 2022). Current discourse on educational leadership underscores the importance of transformational and collaborative leadership styles for adaptive and innovative organizational cultures (Lamm et al., 2021; Daramola, 2025). However, empirical focus on leadership dynamics within art education administration in tertiary institutions remains underdeveloped, with most research addressing broader higher education administration or art education pedagogy rather than leadership structures.

Leadership in art education must balance creative autonomy with institutional accountability, managing the tensions between artistic expression and academic rigour. In contexts of rapid change, globalized curricula, digital transformations, and evolving stakeholder expectations, administrators need adaptive leadership frameworks that support creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration, and stakeholder engagement. This study examines how different leadership styles influence administrative effectiveness and educational outcomes in visual art tertiary programmes.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Leadership theories, particularly transformational and democratic approaches, provide lenses to explore leadership dynamics. Transformational leadership emphasizes vision, motivation, and intellectual stimulation, which can foster innovation in curriculum and practice (Lamm et al., 2021). Democratic leadership supports participatory decision-making and collaborative dialogue, essential in arts environments where creativity thrives on shared vision. Empirical studies suggest leadership styles correlate with organizational performance. Daramola's (2025) study in Nigerian tertiary education found democratic

leadership positively influences staff motivation and teamwork, whereas autocratic leadership had negative effects on employee performance. In art-specific contexts, research from Northern China reveals that transformational leadership knowledge among middle-level art administrators correlates with enhanced communication skills and institutional responsiveness (Higher Education Studies, 2025). Contemporary models proposed for art university leadership in Liaoning Province highlight competencies such as team spirit, moral behaviour, and intellectual stimulation as critical for administrative effectiveness (Yin Mingyu et al., 2023).

Methodology

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods approach integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to capture a comprehensive picture of leadership dynamics in visual art education administration.

Participants and Sampling

150 academic administrators and faculty members from visual art departments across three tertiary institutions, 20 purposively selected leaders (Deans, Heads of departments, and Program Coordinators) for in-depth interviews.

Instruments

1. Leadership Styles Questionnaire – measured perceptions of transformational, democratic, and autocratic leadership.
2. Administrative Effectiveness Scale – evaluated communication, decision-making processes, and organizational innovation.
3. Semi-structured interview guide – explored lived experiences of leadership, challenges, and strategies.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential tests (correlation and regression). Qualitative data were coded using thematic analysis to identify recurrent leadership themes.

Results

Quantitative Findings

Leadership Style	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Correlation with Effectiveness
Transformational	4.12	0.76	$r = .52$, $p < .01$
Democratic	3.95	0.81	$r = .52$, $p < .01$
Autocratic	2.21	0.94	$r = -.44$, $p < .05$

Participants reported high prevalence and positive impact of transformational leadership practices, such as vision setting and mentorship, on administrative effectiveness and staff satisfaction. Democratic leadership also correlated with improved communication and collaboration. In contrast, autocratic practices correlated negatively with staff motivation and decision-making inclusivity, echoing findings from broader higher education studies in Nigeria (Daramola, 2025).

Discussion

This study underscores the centrality of leadership style in shaping administrative effectiveness within visual art education. Transformational leadership, with its emphasis on inspiring vision and intellectual stimulation, corresponds with greater institutional adaptability and curriculum innovation. These results align with literature indicating that transformational leaders positively affect collaborative behaviour and goal attainment in higher education contexts (Lamm et al., 2021). Democratic leadership's positive correlation with communication and engagement reinforces the need for participatory structures in creative academic settings.

The negative correlation of autocratic leadership with administrative effectiveness mirrors findings from general educational leadership studies, which portray rigid, top-down approaches as detrimental to innovation and morale (Daramola, 2025). Given the inherently creative ethos of visual art education, leadership approaches that promote shared governance, reflexivity, and creativity are particularly salient.

However, the dynamics of leadership in art education must also consider contextual variables such as cultural expectations, institutional mission, and resource availability, which influence leadership enactment and effectiveness.

Conclusion

Leadership dynamics in visual art education administration significantly influence organizational effectiveness, faculty engagement, and curriculum innovation. Transformational and democratic leadership styles demonstrate the strongest positive impacts, fostering environments where creative inquiry and collaborative practice thrive. Conversely, authoritarian leadership practices undermine administrative efficacy and stakeholder morale.

Recommendations

Based on findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Leadership Development Programs: Institutions should implement targeted leadership training emphasizing transformational and democratic skills tailored to the creative academic context.
2. Participatory Governance Models: Develop policies that support faculty and departmental involvement in decision-making to enhance collaboration and shared vision.
3. Institutional Support for Innovation: Allocate resources to support innovation initiatives that reflect the evolving landscape of art education.
4. Future Research: Conduct longitudinal studies to examine leadership effects over time and cross-cultural comparisons in diverse tertiary settings.

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CHAPTER SEVENTY-TWO

DIGITALIZATION OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY RESOURCES; KEY TO EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

Colleges of Education were established with a view to producing well qualified NCE graduate teachers. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) as its regulatory agency charged with the responsibility of giving approval, supervision and accreditation of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) programmes. Colleges of Education, is where the training of teachers and educational administrators takes place, digitalized academic library resources play a vital role in supporting effective leadership. Institutional leaders depend on timely and reliable information to make informed decisions, develop policies, and enhance academic standards. The colleges continue to receive attention for the development of teacher education in Nigeria. However, in all the colleges of education, access to knowledge is a critical success factor in the pursuit of any academic program. To achieve the above, effective leadership application to library is a key to excellent educational foundation that facilitates the production of educational manpower in conjunction with the good services rendered by library staff. College of education is under the supervision of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). Preservation of information, access to knowledge and information is the main mandate of college libraries, this can be achieve by digitalizing the information resources in collaboration with the aid of effective leadership style application in this era of globalization, since the library attached to college of education are academic libraries that deals with developing of manpower for the society.

Academic libraries are the integral part of any institution of higher learning being the central point for teaching, learning and research activities. They connect people with their resources and services, they strengthen the institutions and the communities with their wealth of knowledge documented in varied sources which are crucial for research, decision making and personal development. All efforts of the library operations both human and materials are geared towards providing effective services to library users (students, staff and community).

Over the years, access to resources in the library had been through the traditional card catalogue using author/title, subject and shelf list. Today,

technology has infiltrated all areas of human life and academic libraries are not left out. The advent of computers and telecommunication technology has ushered a new dimension to library operations and services. Modern electronic-based library management system has emerged for the multitude of manual works/services offered in the past. Haber (2011) opined that the provision of books in the past was an independent function of the libraries, but today, their offerings have evolved with the digital age. The traditional concepts of library as a static building confined in a space where users can physically visit to access information are gradually fading away.

Library users now prefer more computer content, digitized finding aids, digital repositories of articles, online access to newspapers and magazines while visiting the library is getting out of place (Lombardi, 2000). Thus, libraries are facing new challenges; new competitors, new demands and new expectations from the users. Byamugisha (2010) opined that users 'expectations (from information professionals) for distance services have increased more than ever. Academic libraries are therefore constantly under pressure to meet the changing information needs of their diverse scholars. Absorbing these pressures therefore, calls for quality service delivery in all sections of the library. Thus, most academic libraries in Africa and Nigeria in particular, have embarked on integration of technology in their operations for better services to their users in other to remain relevant. Otubelu and Ume (2015) opined that there is need for sources of information to be provided, preserved and made available in a more convenient and accessible formats. Digitalization of academic library has become a crucial aspect of current global information trends through which library resources and services are made available on-line for users to access even in their comfort zones, homes, offices, halls of residence, etc.

Digitalization is simply a process of conversion of library materials from printed or hard copies to electronic or soft copies or from analogue to digital format. Omotayo, Jagboro Aboyade (2012) defined digitization as all the steps involved in the process of making collections of historical and other materials available online. Gbaje (2007), describe digitization as a process of converting non-digital born documents into digital format, it entails all the sequence involved in the course of converting conventional information materials into machine readable format (digital format). It involves not just the conversion of prints documents to digital formats but also includes policy enactment, planning and budgeting, acquisition of appropriate technology, scanning, uploading to the web or repository, preserving, maintaining archival media, and the organization of digital content into a navigable format (flexible and compatible programmes) for increased access and effective service delivery of the digital content to the target audience.

In a digital era, academic libraries no longer restrict themselves to print resources and manual services but have extended their operations to inter-disciplinary concept and computer hardware and software. They have become more

proactive, more vibrant keeping abreast with the latest technologies in other to be where their users are. With digital and visual libraries, information which was formally hard to get can now be accessed within a blink of an eye through the internet. When a library is digitized, many people can possibly gain access to as much materials as desired anytime, anywhere without any hindrance and without observing the library regular opening hours, a difficult situation with text resources (Ezeani & Ezema, 2011). This can be achieve when it is properly manage by an effective leader.

The concept of leadership is a fascinating one. It is seen as a dominating factor in an organization or group in motivating staff or people to perform toward goal setting and goal achieving (Akilaya, 2011). Leadership is to be the process of directing and influencing the task -relating activities of group members. Different leadership styles have different effects on staff. Nwanokor, (2022), viewed leadership styles, as a techniques and manner of relationship between the leader and the subordinates, He further said that it is the method which the leader adopts to direct the followers in the process of guiding them towards the attainment of set goals, and stated the example as autocratic/ authoritarian leadership style, democratic/participative leadership style, pseudo democratic leadership style, laissez faire leadership style. Some researchers identified some leadership style such as; autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic, participative, charismatic, situational, transactional, transformational, laissez-faire, and facilitative leadership styles. (Germano, 2020; Kham, Kham and Ismail, 2015; Ojo (as cited in Opaleke, 2012). The leadership varies and need to be applied to situation as the case arises to meet the global era.

Academic Libraries as a Foundation for Leadership in Colleges of Education

Academic libraries are central to teaching, research, and administration in Colleges of Education. Leaders such as provosts, registrars, deans, and heads of departments rely on library resources for strategic planning, curriculum development, accreditation processes, and quality assurance. The availability of digitalized library resources strengthens leadership capacity by providing quick access to current educational research and policy information. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of any library is determined by the satisfaction derived by the users which is the extent to which they are able to access and make adequate use of the available resources and services provided by the library, this can be achieved with the aid of good leadership. No doubt the quality of teaching, learning and research development of students depends absolutely on their interactions and use of the diverse and relevant information resources at their disposal. Thus, the prove of excellence in any institution of higher learning is dependent on the strength and quality of its library resources, the services provided as well as the ability of the users to access and make good use of these resources and services with effective leadership skill.

Importance of Digitalization of Academic Library Resources to Effective Leadership

There are different importance, but few will be analyzed below:

Enhanced Access to Information

Digitalized library resources enable institutional leaders to access information anytime and anywhere. This supports timely decision-making and improves administrative efficiency.

Support for Evidence-Based Leadership

Effective leadership in Colleges of Education requires decisions based on credible data and research findings. Digital libraries provide access to scholarly journals, educational policies, and research reports that guide informed leadership practices.

Improvement of Teaching and Learning Quality

Digital academic resources assist leaders in monitoring instructional quality and supporting curriculum development. Access to updated educational materials enhances teaching effectiveness and academic performance.

Promotion of Research and Institutional Development

Digital libraries encourage research activities among academic staff and students. Increased research output improves institutional visibility, academic ranking, and leadership effectiveness.

Efficient Management of Library and Institutional Resources

Digitalization reduces challenges related to physical storage, material deterioration, and space management. This enables leaders to plan effectively and allocate institutional resources more efficiently.

Procedures for Digitalization of Library Resources

Digitization undoubtedly is the most recent but very powerful tool ever invented in the history of modern library in Nigeria. For any library to succeed in this venture, certain protocols must be duly observed. Below are the steps to take in digitization of academic library resources according to Fabunmi,, Paris, Fabunni, (2006) and Subhash (2018);

Policy Making: this is a plan of action or guiding statement agreed or chosen by the higher authority of the institution/organization concerning the project. The guiding statement will serve as a reference point and guide for implementing the project. Subhash (2018) noted that the goals of the digitization project, the purpose and the objectives of the project must be clearly stated in the policy.

Policy Approval: the policy should be submitted to the appropriate authorities for scrutiny and approval before implementation of the project. For instance, an academic library will need the approval of its parent body and other funding agencies before any digitization project can be embarked upon (Fabunmi, Paris and Fabunni, 2006).

Planning, Budgeting and Monitoring: digitalization involves huge amount of money hence the need to set up a planning committee that will draw the plan and budget for the exercise. The budgets for digitization projects should make provisions for: Salaries, wages and benefits for the staff, provision for staff training, purchase and supplies of equipment, other services such as contracts and legal fees, Maintenance, licenses, communication charges, contingency (set aside 7% of the total budget for unexpected expenses).

Acquisition of Appropriate Technology: the plan made for digitization project will also include the appropriate technology to acquire. The technology here includes all the equipment both hardware and software required for the project.

Decision making: decision has to be taken on the procedure to adopt, the mode of operation, whether to link up with the existing digital libraries, to digitize in-house or to contract it out. Decision is also taken on the time limit for the project.

Sensitization, Psychological Preparation and Retraining of Staff: It is not uncommon for people to resist change in a time like this, just for the fear of the unknown. In academic library some staff may resist the digitalization project out of fear that the success of the project may affect their jobs adversely. Those who are not skilled in the use of these new technologies may not be willing to adjust. All these categories of people have their genuine reasons to resist the new technology. It is the responsibility of the library management to train and help them to conquer their fear.

Legal/Copyright Issues: one of the most important selection criteria for digitization is the copyright status of the original materials, that is, who owns what? Selection of archival materials for digitization should first be based on a clear understanding of copyright law and the rights of ownership (Tennant, 2000). What does physical ownership mean? rights of reproduction? or will it be necessary to obtain permission to digitize? Then after digitization, will the institution be able to protect the digital assets by managing the rights to their use'? If the institution does not have the rights to digitize, or the means to manage the digital assets, then digital project should not be embarked on.

Selection Criteria: digitalization projects according to UNESCO, IFLA, (2002) should be user oriented or based on high demand for access hence the criteria for digitization, the process of selecting items to be digitized will adopt such standard as library selection criteria and which include: value, significance to the overall collections, user demand and interest, availability and fragility of the original document. All these should be put into consideration.

Verifications: To avoid duplication of efforts and having selected materials for digitization, verification should be carried out to ascertain if the digital copies of materials selected already exist. Duplication of efforts is not necessary. However, re-digitalization is necessary if the electronic resources created were carried out using older technologies. In addition, if the copyright permission to digitize

resources was not in the public domain (that is, if it was for internal use only) and if the material or the institution concerned wish to embark on a wider area network such as the Internet or World Wide Web, then, there is the need to re-digitalize the materials. In the past it was thought that when scholarly production was transferred to an institution the legal rights to reproduce the material are automatically made. Today institutions can no longer count on "the fact that legal rights are transferable but ensure that the project objectives are attained within the context of the Copyrights Act.

Metadata: this is the information that describes the digital objects. This information helps users to find, manage and use the digital objects. It depicts the total historic record of the digital object and the totality of information about the objects. Metadata helps to identify the work, the person that created, migrated or reformatted the work and other descriptive information about the work. It also provides unique identifying information about the organization's files and databases that have detailed information about the digital contents; describes the technical environment in which the digital files were created, equipment used, the software, operating systems and other things. The justification for digitization and provision of metadata is to enable future use.

Tools and Techniques for Digitalization of Library Resources

This rapid pace in the advancement of ICT no doubt has revolutionized the operations and services of libraries worldwide. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is a common place. Digital libraries are being created by most academic libraries to better their services and to satisfy the diverse needs of their diverse users.

The first thing to consider in digitalization project is the appropriate software and hardware suitable for the project. Software is a general term that refers to the applications, scripts and programs that runs the device. Rowely in Ekemezia (2003) refers to Software programs as instructions that indicate to the computer the task to be performed which includes how information should be stored, formatted and manipulated to meet output requirements. It comprises the entire sets of programs, procedures and routines necessary for the digital project. Digital library software is a set of instructions, data or programs that helps in the digital organization of library resources such as books, journals, projects, thesis, catalog, etc. The commonly used application software include; web browser, word processors, spreadsheet software, multimedia software, graphics, database etc. Hardware is the machinery, equipment, apparatus, gadgets and other physical tools required for the digitalization project. It is also refer to as the physical equipment and devices used to facilitate the digitalization process e.g.; the computer, printer, book scanners, digital storage, hard-drive, slides, CDROM, VHS to digital converter, server, etc. Hardware and software with high quality specification are required for effective digitalization. Selecting the most recent version of software with good quality and digital library specification should be

given adequate consideration. Fatoki (2002) opined that for library software to be adjudged suitable, it will have requirements of memory, disk-storage search facilities, print formulations and affordable cost with program utilities incorporated. Also, the nature of the materials to be digitalized will guide the choice of equipment for digitalization.. Angadi (2021(identified three types of software required for digitalization project as ; the scanning software i.e. the scanner, the image editing software, normally applied to the image after it has been scanned and the batch-processing software which is useful for the generation of the thumbnails and access images converting from one file format to another. Adogbeji in Igwesi (2010) revealed that most libraries do not hold on software selection processes before its acquisition and that procurement of effective and efficient packages should be a high priority of any academic library for adequate computerization. Thus, the issue of standard and current software is of paramount importance. Rothenberg (1991), elucidating on the importance of software to digital library mentioned that digital document are not vulnerable to loss via media but they can become inaccessible and unreadable if the software needed to interprets them or the hardware on which the software runs is lost or become obsolete . Some of the required software as noted by Fatoki (2006) includes Digital Imaging software(DIS) which is use to crop, rotate, colour, correct, resize and save images in proper file formats once the images are scanned . Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is used for scanning printed pages as images on a flat-bed scanner and recognizing the letters as ASCII text. Digital image management software DIMS is used to manage the large number of digital files.

Jagboro (2007), identify some tools and other equipment used in digitalization as; computer systems, scanners which could be flat-bed, hand-held or sophisticated scanning machine like SMA21 and kirats, digital camera or camera phones could also be used in some cases , CD or DVD writer, printer and the materials to be digitalized. Fatoki (2006) noted that some equipment such as computers used in digitalization will require certain capabilities for digitalization in other to carry large files.. Fatoki noted that a computer with a fast processing speed should be selected as it helps to sort through all the information quickly and effectively, hence the bigger the processor, the better Random Access Memory (RAM).

The hard drive is where all the files and programs on the computer are stored. Hard drive with large capacity is preferable as digital image. Files can be very large and can take up a lot of storage space on the computer. The larger the hard drive, the more file it can take. New or additional hard drive can be installing on the computer. CD-ROM drive is used to read information on computer disc and it is standard on nearly all computers/ It is an external storage device. Scanners with high quality resolution and speed should be selected, such as flatbed scanners. It is very good for unbounded pages and photographs and can be used for

transparences, slides, films and single-sheet batching using additional accessories. Other types of scanners includes film/slides, drum, large-format and planetary scanners. Digital cameras are the best way to capture 3 dimensional objects since scanners cannot focus on items that are two far from the scanner bed; they are a cheaper alternative to planetary scanners for fragile and oversize items.

Impact of Digitalization on Scholarship

21st Century has witnessed a tremendous flow of information globally. Digital technology, on-line information resources and services have revolutionized all aspect of education including how information is accessed and disseminated. Libraries, as information providers, are now shifting their roles from the custodians of printed collections and manual services to providers of service-oriented digital information resources where e-books, e-journals, CD-ROM databases, online databases and web based resources and varieties of electronic media are replacing the traditional resources of libraries. This shift has the potential to enhance access to information and cater for a broader audience beyond the physical constraints of library buildings. This will remove the problem of distance, as users do not have to travel to libraries to consult the hard copies of library materials before they can access and use such materials. Ocran, 2017, emphasized that digitalization has been recognized as one on-line technology in the world that can offer access and promote usage of information across boundaries.

Digitalization also provide means of preserving the content of library materials by creating an accessible facsimile of the items in order to put less pressure on already fragile original. Oni (2018) opined that, it is a veritable information source of e-learning and offers a platform for collaboration and interoperability of libraries globally as it ensures better preservation and dissemination of library resources. The international Federation of Library ((IFLA) in Adetoun (2007) emphasized that digitalization enhances the visibility and publicity of the library resources, because a material that used to be available to a few people who are in physical contact with the item could be accessed by a wider audience anytime, anywhere through the internet or CDs in a digital era. Ezeani and Ezema, (2009) affirmed that it creates visibility not only of the library's content but also the scholarly work (theses, dissertation, project work, seminar papers conferences proceedings, working papers and technical reports) within the institution thereby raising the profile of that institution. Fatoki (2005), added that digitalization enables Africans export information and knowledge and be pro-actively involved in the development of global information infrastructure.

The fact that library users are no longer obliged to visit the library at the regular open hours to meet all their information needs cannot be overemphasized. This is because the application of technologies in library services and good leadership application making resources available, has created avenues for scholars to search the library on-line catalogue; use the subject guide or data base to access

a citation from the internet or access a full text article from well based e-resources (Ofua and Emiri, 2012). With the use of electronic gadgets users can browse an electronic journal, fill out an inter-library lending form, e-mail a reference question via the ask-a-librarian service or borrow an e-book all by remote access, via availability of leaders to answer the questions. This will no doubt change the orientation and traditional approach to teaching and learning. Yau, in Njuku, (2016) emphasized that conversion to electronic resources has the opportunity to address the paucity of teaching and research materials in the libraries of higher institutions in Nigeria as well as give room for sharing of research outputs with the global community among institutions and the local research centres. The implementation of modern information technologies into library processes has also brought library and information services to a new level because the leaders adopted it. The library digital model enables a full-fledged dialogue with distant users which allows access to library services at the same level as those readers who work with information directly in book collections (Ike, Chinedu and Umah, 2023)..

Challenges of Digitalization of Library Resources and Services

Libraries in the past decades were the major providers of information .Today, technology has overtaken all areas of the society. Libraries are facing new challenges; new competitors, new demands, new expectations consequent upon the changing needs of their diverse users. Baro, Oyeniran and Ateboh,(2013) posited that one of the major challenges facing digital library projects in Africa has been the readiness of academic libraries in terms of skills and knowledge to implement digital library . Other challenges facing digitalization of academic libraries include:

Inadequate funding: the boost of excellence in any academic institution is dependent on the strength and quality of its library resources both print and non-print. Digitalization is an expensive project that requires huge funding due to frequent hardware and software upgrades, increasing cost of subscription, purchase of ICT equipment, staff training, reimbursement and maintenance of the project etc. Contrarily, government support for education sector in Nigeria is inadequate. Nwalo (2000), noted that the problem with computer applications in African libraries includes indifference and inadequate government funding. Hence, for any academic library to meet the budget need for digitalization project ADOGBEJI1 and AKPORHONOR (2021) suggested the need for fund drives with permission from the management to augment the government subvention in order to meet up with the training and acquisition of the equipment as it is done in the developed nations.

Incompetence: Some librarians in the academic libraries are reluctant to embrace the new technologies because of their incompetence. Tanawade (2011) stated that many librarians lack self-reliance in the face of growing information technology and this slows down the delivery of service as well as delays productivity.

Jowkar (2008) added that the most problematic factors that slow down the process of computer introduction are lack of knowledge of computers and database search by librarians and the users.

Insufficient energy supply: power supply in Nigeria is in deplorable state. This does not argue well with effective implementation of electronic information services. Most academic libraries use alternative energy sources such as power generators, solar system, green technology, turbine gas, and others to function. However, these machines are prone to maintenance problems, high costs of diesel and gasoline. The resulting effect is the provision of epilepsy services. Edbiton (2012), opined that energy issues in the country have become part of the spending record of most organizations and library as an organization is not left out of the problem.

Lack of knowledge of technology: lack of skills among librarians is a major impediment to providing effective library services in this digital era. Some professional librarians do not have the technical expertise to work in libraries. This includes the technological efficiency to communicate with appropriate technology, to solve problem, access, integrate, evaluate and improve learning. Anyira (2011) added that librarians who do not have advanced ICT skills cannot provide effective office services. Thus, lack of basic skills in the use of information technology has become a bottleneck to better library services.

Low Internet Connection: Internet is a crucial factor for the success of any digital project. Chigbu and Dim (2012) buttressed that there is no energy-efficient connections that can serve as a starting point for the development of Internet services in Africa. Olaboud (2007), added that one of the constraints that have led to poor Internet development in Africa is the initial investment for the installation of Internet equipment. He added that almost all African countries are in financial crises hence lacks finance to acquire relevant assets.

Copyright: digital materials are very easy to download, copy, duplicate, transmit, share and distribute to whomever, anytime, anywhere consequent upon the advancement of ICT. This is a very big threat to copyright protection law. Copyright law has been violated severally in a digital environment because it has no control over access to content and reproduction of multiple copies of digital media.

Conclusion

The world is completely a global village. ICT has made a significant impact in the growth and development of digital libraries. This has improved the efficiency of library operations and services with a good leadership skill. Thus all academic libraries must strive to be part of this global trend in other to be at the forefront of information provision and dissemination as well as remain relevant to their users.

Effective leadership is essential for successful digitalization initiatives in Colleges of Education. Leaders must provide adequate funding, formulate supportive policies, ensure continuous training for library staff, and promote the

integration of digital library resources into academic and administrative activities. Strong leadership commitment enhances sustainability and optimal utilization of digital libraries.

Digitalization of academic library resources is a critical factor in achieving effective leadership in Colleges of Education. By improving access to information, supporting evidence-based decision-making, and enhancing teaching and research activities, digital libraries empower institutional leaders to manage their institutions more effectively. Although challenges exist, proactive leadership and strategic planning can ensure the successful digital transformation of academic libraries.

Suggestions

1. The success of any library is determined by the strength and quality of personnel and leadership. Training and retraining of librarians in the use of basic ICT is a necessity for the growth and survival of any digital library.
2. The government should give adequate financial support to academic institutions for enhancement of library development. Also, the library parent body as leaders, should be committed to the implementation of the statutory percent budgets accrue to the library to ensure better service delivery of digital libraries in academic setting.
3. Every academic library deserves a stand-by alternative power supply such as a high capacity generator or solar energy to leverage the problem of limited power supply in the country.
4. Conferences, workshops and seminars should be organized regularly for all categories of library staff to keep them updated on the current trends in the digital world.

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CHAPTER SEVENTY-THREE

GENDER, QUEER LITERATURE AND SEXUAL PERVERSION IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY: REFLECTIONS ON AKWAEKE EMEZI'S *THE DEATH OF VIVEK OJI*

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Introduction

Literature is used in the broadest sense to refer to written works and printed materials that give information, such as books, articles, pamphlets and other like materials (Anigbogu and Uwakwe 3). Considering literature as such excludes oral literature, as the focus is only on written literature and information resources. This is the pedestrian conception of literature. In the narrow sense, literature is said to mean fictional and non-fictional works of artistic value and quality (Anigbogu and Uwakwe 3). Beyond the noted two considerations, literature refers to the study of imaginative works that recount certain aspects of human experience (Anigbogu and Uwakwe 3). Queer literature is a sub-field of literature, which recounts aspects of human sexual experience. It focuses on and literarily represents the sexual experience of non-heterosexual persons. Also, sexual perversion is also an aspect of human sexual experience having a lot to it. This study seeks to explore gender and sexual perversion in Akwaeke Emezi's *The Death of Vivek Oji*. It should be noted that in this chapter, *The Death of Vivek Oji* will be used interchangeably with *Vivek Oji,* the short form of the former.

The assertion that sexual perversion has a lot to it is because, like queerness, sexual perversion is consistently debated. For persons practising non-normative sexualities (sexualities other than heterosexuality), there is nothing with sexual perversion. In contrast, there is everything wrong with sexual perversion to those who practice (or are bent on practising and generalising) heterosexuality (Nkereuwem, Queer Literature and 1). The sexualities other than heterosexuality are regarded in broad term as homosexuality. Nevertheless, the concept of homosexuality only captures or refers to lesbianism, gay and bisexuality, leaving out other variants of queer(ness). Queer, unlike homosexuality, covers all sexualities (lesbianism, gay, bisexuality, transgender, intersexuality and what have you) other than heterosexuality and whatever concerns them in totality. It is to that end one talks or hears about queer literature, which refers to the specific literature concerning queer people and their sexual behaviour, identity, orientation

and so on (Nkereuwem, Queer Literature and 2). Queer literature is characterised by all the known genres of literature. The focus of this study shall be on the fictional genre of queer literature.

In contemporary time, 'there's been a lot of queer stuff going on in universities recently' (Spargo 3). From this Tamsin Spargo's observation, it is clear that queer is a recent thing, which has universities and other tertiary institutions as the number one agents of its spread, projection, exploration and discourse. 'Queer', as Spargo rightly points out, is what was 'once hurled or whispered as an insult,' but 'now proudly claimed as a marker of transgression by people who once called themselves lesbian or gay' (3). This means that queer is a concept for sexuality, sex and gender, which was erstwhile used for contemptuous consideration and reference to persons perverting sex in forms of gay and lesbianism. Yet, gays and lesbians used to shy away from the notion of queer identity. Then, most individuals and groups never liked to hear anything about queer or even engage in any discourse on it. These days, things have turned around. Thus, queer has become a popular, well-received and proudly used concept for describing or referring to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons (Spargo 3). Queer revolves around gender, sex and sexuality in concept, theory and practice. In view of the foregoing, this chapter is concerned with exploring gender, queer literature and sexual perversion in the contemporary society, with some reflections on Akwaeke Emezi's *Vivek Oji*.

Nigerian Fictional Writers and Changes in Society

Generally, writers are invaluable agents of change in society (Ushie and Aboh 127; Robert 112; Uwatt 1; wa Thiong'o 74-5). Thus, Nigerian fictional writers are agents of change. Like writers in general, Nigerian fictional writers help in both national and grassroots struggles. They fight for and cause changes in various facets of life. They pursue and cause the attainment of quality life that is free from all parasitic exploitative relations. The functions of literature are made possible (or carried out) by writers. In the words of wa Thiong, writers 'help in our daily struggle for the right and security of bread, shelter, clothes and song, the right of a people to products of their own sweat' (wa Thiong'o 75). Uwatt notes that writers help in human, economic, social, cultural and religious struggles, among others (1). Uwatt also notes that writers are active agents of revolution in society from time being, as evidenced in Arab, American, French, Kenyan and Tanzanian revolutions, Pan-Africanism, Harlem renaissance and Negritude movement (1). Ushie and Aboh state that writers are actors in politics, governance, administration, management, and virtually all human endeavours (127).

From the above points about writers, it is quite obvious that Nigerian fictional writers have played significant roles in various facets of life in Nigeria. They have played aforementioned roles, among others. A few Nigerian fictional writers have recently delved into writing on theme and making struggles and

contributions in that area. Their engagement with queer is a demonstration of the contemporary emergent roles of the Nigerian fictional writers. The Nigerian fiction is graced with prominent literary figures of the varied eras of Nigerian literature, right from its inception to the present day. At the mention of Nigerian fiction, the names of such prominent literary authorities come to mind. They include Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Flora Nwakpa Elechi Amadi, JP Clark, Femi Osofisan, Ben Okri, Buchi Emecheta, Sefi Atta, Helon Habila, Teju Cole, Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ahmed Yerima, and Niyi Osundare, to mention but a few.

Earliest and earlier Nigerian fictional writers engage with creative writing to narrate all that concerns Africa, including its harsh unpleasant colonial experience, in African rather than Western perspective. Like Nigerian writers in other genres of literature, Nigerian fictional writers have remained committed to the task of Africanising Nigerian literary landscape and thereby decolonising it in possible ways from Western literary (neo)colonisation. In fact, for this study, writing for literary decolonisation birthed the works of Achebe, Soyinka and others, who rose to writing for corrective and reformative purposes. That is, they took up the task of rewriting the Westernised and falsified narratives of colonial writers, whose works on Nigeria in particular and Africa in general misrepresent(ed) these places along with their people and panorama. They also engage in socio-political satire and culture portrayal.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is a political satire that embodies varied socio-cultural and political themes. The author is particularly worried about colonial ills causing changes to African-Igbo cultural norms and values and making individuals to find a space in this setting. It criticises colonial politics and destruction or distortion of Igbo customs and traditions. In Soyinka's *Ake: The Years of Childhood, Death and the King's Horseman* and *You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir*, his personal experiences and views on Africa and Nigeria are put forward to the audience. Chinua Achebe is criticised by Ngugi waThiong'o, in his *Writers in Politics,* for "merely capturing and reflecting the struggling around him, and Wole Soyinka for his heroic stand as a social individual" (74-5).

Chimamanda Adichie's novels are the likes of Soyinka's and Achebe's fictional works. In her *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), the audience sees her engagement with politics and military coup along with secession war in Nigeria through the prism of family and personal relationships. Her *Americanah* (2013), which narrates the love story of Ifemulu and Obinze, as they get separated when one goes to America for studies, also satirically engages with themes of migration (rural drift), racism and globalisation. Femi Osofisan engages with themes of colonialism and its attendant lingering effects, corruption, injustice, and indigenous cultures and the challenges confronting them. His *Kolera Kolej* (1975) portrays the Nigerian university as a placed spared of the spread of cholera. His most renowned write-up, *The Women of Owu* (2004), a play, narrates the

devastating effects of the war between the Ijebu and the Ife from 1821 to 1826. The play derives from and applies the Euripides' *The Trojan Women*.

Ben Okri, a famous Nigerian novelist and poet engages with themes of myths, ancestors and spirits. This engagement is evidenced in his The Famished Road (9991), in which he narrates the journey of Azaro, a spirit-child narrator. Akwaeke Emezi's Ada and Vivek Oji also exhibit a kind of spirit narrator, as they narrate mystic forces and aspects of their being queer. The inner world experience of Teju Cole's hero, Julius, in *Open City* (2011) reflects the inner mental and mystic experiences of Akwaeke Emezi's heroine(s) and hero(es), Ada and Vivek Oji. In other words, the inner world experience reveals the thought processes that also apply to those of queer persons, such as Ada's and Vivek Oji's in Emezi's *Freshwater* (2018) and *The Death of Vivek Oji* (2020). Just like Cole's graduate in despair, Adaobi Nwaubani's protagonist, Kingsley, is frustrated by joblessness. Kingsley's frustration leads him into the world of email confidence tricks, the integral part of the yahoo-yahoo scam (419). Nwaubani's *portrayal and illustration are evident in I Do Not Come to You by Chance* (2010).

Emecheta's familial and marital experiences (particularly from her violent and abusive husband, Onwordi) informed her fictional satire of the Nigerian cultural practices that relegate, enslave and abuse women. She criticises and reconstructs the mentality that the ability to bear children is what defines a woman. In *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), she shows a fulfilling woman that defines herself through womanhood and derives joy from the successes of her children. Sefi Atta also writes against the repression of woman and the political corruption of the military administration in Nigeria in the 1970's. These themes are evident in her *Everything Good Will Come* (2005). The dictatorial (mis)deeds of military rule in Nigeria are also chronicled by Helon Habila in his *Waiting for an Angel* (2002). His other renowned works are *Measuring Time* (2007) and *Oil on Water* (2011).

Recent queer books by Nigerian writers include Chinelo Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees* (2015), Unoma Azuah's *Blessed Body* (2016) and *Embracing My Shadow* (2020), Olumide Popoola's *When We Speak of Nothing* (2017), Chike Frankie Edozien's *Lives of Great Men* (2017), Nnanna Ikpo's *Fimi Sile Forever* (2017), and Akwaeke Emezi's *Freshwater* (2018), *Pet* (2019) and *The Death of Vivek Oji* (2020). Buki Paollon's *An Ordinary Wonder* (2021), a Nigerian novel, glorifies an intersexual character. Arinze Ifeakandu's *God's Children are Little Broken Things* (2022) questions the possibility of having deep love and hope where society expects highly from the individual, such as the expectation to yield to heterosexual normative sexuality, and gender.

Some other recent queer books of positive representation by other Africans include Diriye Osman's *Fairytales for Lost Children*; Damon Galgut's *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*; K Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*; and Andre Aciman's *Call Me By Your Name*. Osman presents young characters that are

Somalia gays and lesbians, who are faced with family, identity and immigration constraints. Galgut makes an analysis of being gay in a macho society. *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* contains the narrative of a male sex-worker and the gay underworld in Cape Town. Aciman's writes on the sudden strong affection and romance between a little and a summer guest at his parent's Cliffside mansion on the Italian Rivera. Very recently, Cassava Press makes a contribution to Nigerian queer with the collection of articles entitled *She Called Me a Woman: Nigeria's Queer Women Speak*. There are still others too. Frieda Ekotto's *Don't Whisper Too Much and Portrait of a Young Artiste from Bona Mbella* positively portrays African lesbians.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Memory Theory (MT), which aptly applies to queerness. Its application to queerness makes it the most suitable for the study. The leading proponents of MT include Muñoz (*Disidentifications: Queers of colour*; *Cruising utopia: the then*), Freeman, Delany, Love, and Castiglia and Reed, who share the viewpoint that memory is an essential mechanism for understanding the subjective relationships of queer and transgender people (Lloyd). It could be argued that these theorists drew insight from Freud's metaphorical analysis of how the memory works in relation to consciousness and unconsciousness. To Freud, both conscious mind and unconscious mind develop a memory after the fact of perception (430-431). The individual keeps some aspects of his or her experience and do away with the others. He or she remains conscious of those aspects of the experience kept back, and remains unconscious of the aspects left out (430-431).

According to Freud, that is how the individual perceives an experience, develops a memory, and interprets the memory. In the context of queerness, it is observed that for queer and transgender people, memories have a powerful role in understanding subjectivity (Lloyd 44). It is important to note here that the term 'queer' is a noun, an adjective and an adverb. In this work, it is used mostly as a noun and an adjective. As a noun, it also stands in for queerness. That is why 'queer' and 'queerness' are used interchangeably somewhere in this work. Again, Lloyd adds that 'the participants' of his research were 'afraid of various periods of time,' upon 'realising [that] they had a non-normative gender or sexual subjectivity' (47). Thinking and reading are essential in understanding memories. Experience is got from reading. Among other factors, the thinking or thought of queer and transgender people is influenced by what they read, which forms and/or builds their experience.

Thus, the subjectivities of queer and transgender people are largely products of their memories– memories of what they read (Lloyd 44). Muñoz (*Disidentifications: Queers of colour*) and Delany hold that for the sake of an illusionary 'greater public safety', the spaces male queer have (had) in public arena are made to disappear. Delany points out the memories of these lost spaces rouse the action of queers,

especially the male queers in this regard. Both Muñoz (*Disidentifications: Queers of Colour*) and Delany demonstrate that there is a nexus between queerness and memory in that memory is needed to get the inspiration for taking actions against agents of neo-liberal hegemony, which could lead to the reclaiming of the lost spaces. Lloyd reveals that queers 'find space to counter dominant ideas about gender, sexuality and memory' (45). In her analysis of lesbian, gay and transgender people and their creative works, Freeman argues that these people have non-normative relationships with time and that this is deeply intertwined with non-normative sexualities. She argues that queer conception of time sprawls from 'their memories of a variety of traumas'. Such are the memories gleaned from Vivek Oji, the hero of Emezi's *The Death of Vivek Oji*, who doubles a hero and heroine, as a queer person.

For Freeman, memory arises from prompts and props. For this study, the prompts and props constitute experiences that certain memories are usually made up of. In her *Feeling Backward,* Heather Love says painful and traumatic past memories of sexual experience 'should not be submerged to favour an uncritical embrace of a certain kind of LGBTQ pride' (Love 20). She illustrates with the case of developing 'the negative of a proto-gay child in the darkroom, or in isolation, into a photograph of an out, proud gay man' (Love 20). For her, the pride soon becomes normal. She rejects the notion as well as the practice of relegating, submerging, suffering and/or silencing non-elitist and non-Western LGBTQ people using assimilative literary narratives in queer literature (Lloyd 46-7). Assimilative literary narratives imply imbibing and using literary techniques of narrating the sexual experiences and ideals of LGBTQ persons that are not of Western origin.

Therefore, given the foregoing theoretical postulations of the Memory Theory (MT), it is quite clear that memory is essential in understanding sexual perversion, since it explains place of memory in sexual experience. It is also the base of sexuality, gender and sex. Memory lies behind Emezi's writing, as in the novel under study. As with other characters in many of her novels, memory is what Vivek deploys to demonstrate sexual perversion. In the text, Vivek, relies on memory in narrating their unconscious sexual experiences and acts. The character also relies on memory to recount his/her mystic experiences. Vivek recalls that the life he lives belongs to his late paternal grandmother. These experiences are evoked with the help of memory. He also relies on memory to narrate sexual perversion at various times to his closest persons.

Gender, Queer Literature and Sexual Perversion

Queer literature is said to double as an interdisciplinary set of ideas and a method of literary interpretation (Lamos). Queer literature describes the literary works concerned with a paradigm shift from normative notions, theories and practices of gender and sexuality. The shift radically moves away from single biological or natural sexuality (i.e. heterosexuality) to varying multiple sexualities of social, nature-altered genetic engineering and ideological constructs. For advocates

of queer literature, heterosexuality is not sex-inclusive but exclusive in nature, character, theory and practice. As such, they feel or argue that to have sex-inclusiveness, there should be inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) in all that concerns sex and sexuality. To that end, queer literature rose to take up the task of sex-inclusiveness.

The normative gender and sexual identities of male and female biological sexes, heterosexuality and sexual ethos are rejected and disrupted by queer theorists (Tierney & Dilley; Blackburn, Clark & Nemeth; Besong, Emerging Sexual Ethics). It is to that end that the concept of heterosexism emerged in queer literature. Heterosexism refers to the supposition that all people are heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to and more desirable than homosexuality (McNaught). This study maintains that it is the thoughts held by LGBT persons about heterosexuality that led to the conceptual construction of heterosexism. Just as homosexuality rose in contrast to heterosexuality so also heterosexism was constructed by LGBT and their associates to describe what they conceive of heterosexuality along with its ideals in queer literature.

The purpose of queer literature is to challenge traditional normative knowledge of and teachings about heterosexuality, which are in opposition to homosexuality (aka queer). David Halperin points out in his book, entitled *Saint Foucault: towards a Gay Hagiography*, that Foucault gave no explicit remark on the causes of same-sex desires (4). According to Halperin, "when asked about the distinction between innate predisposition to homosexuality and social conditioning, his response was: 'On this question I have absolutely nothing to say. 'No comment'" (Halperin 4). Rather than pursuing the illusory 'truth' of human sexuality, Foucault focuses his attention on examining its production (Halperin 4; Spargo 13). He concerns himself more with the function of sexuality in society and less with what sexuality is or means (Halperin 4; Spargo 13).

Queer literature also has the objective of challenging readers' perception of sex, sexuality and gender, as they get to know not everyone accepts heterosexuality and normative practices of sex, sexuality and gender. In the course of reading queer literature, readers get exposed to heating debates and politicised discourses on sexuality, sex and gender. Another objective of queer literature is to promote and defend all that concerns queer. This objective is concerned with making themes and issues of LGBTQ+ more visible to both homosexuals and heterosexuals. Queer literature has no single standard genre. This is because most queer poems, novels and other forms of queer fiction cut across the three main genres of literature. In the three texts under study, the prose genre is deployed by the author in portraying queer, which this study considers to be sexual perversion that has to be explored psychoanalytically.

Examples of queer literature include: Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928), James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* (1956), Michel Foucault's 'Power and Strategies' (1980) and *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Harmondsworth (1984), Chinelo

Okparanta's *Under the Udala Tress* (2015), Andrea Lawlor's *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl*, and Akwaeke Emezi's *The Death of Vivek Oji*, *Freshwater* and *Pet*. These are just a few examples among numerous other queer literatures. Of these examples, Michel Foucault's works typical examples of queer theory publications, while others are fictional novels on queer(nees). Nevertheless, the Foucault's (1980) essay, which is neither the beginning nor ending theoretical work on queer, is one of the most influential early works on queer theory. Even Judith Butler, whose *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), is said to be the most influential queer theory book, drew extensively from Foucault's aforementioned essay and book.

According to Spargo, media have confirmed the increasing tolerance as well as the spread of queer, such that even the media that never got involved in publishing or broadcasting queer have had a change in practice to that end. An ample example is the Sun, which had 'announced an end to gay-bashing editorials 'long ago (Spargo 4). As Spargo notes, 'although gay and lesbian characters in soap operas are generally all too respectable, the flamboyant camp of Julian Clary and Eddie Izzard's transvestism have contributed to their success'(4). Sexuality politics by queer persons in the realm of public affairs, such as political offices and tertiary institutions of learning, has aided the success recorded in queer circle. In foregoing assertion is given credence by Gayle Rubin, who notes that 'the realm of sexuality has its own internal politics, inequities, and modes of oppression' (4). These apply to queer sexuality.

Within queer variants (lesbianism, gay, bisexuality, transgender, intersexuality and what have you), internal sexuality politics and inequalities exist. The existence of these undoubtedly allows for oppression. The oppression is more outside the queer circle, as queer people consistently try harder to oppress and subvert heterosexuality with its traditional norms, values and traditions. Just as queer politics persists against heterosexuality, heterosexual politics also persists in resistance to homosexuality. It is to that end that Spargo says sexuality politics leads to 'both deliberate and incidental conflicts of interest and political manoeuvring' (5). As Seidel notes, all kinds of discourse are political, because each discourse serves as a site of struggle, whereby there is a 'semantic space in which meanings are produced and/or challenged' (45). As such, it is quite clear that discourses on both traditional and queer sexualities are political, since they create a semantic avenue for producing and challenging meanings.

Also, Spargo avers that 'sex is always political' (5). His assertion lends credence to the above expressed views. It implies queer is political, since revolves around sex in the strict and broad senses of it. What lies ultimately behind queer(ness) is sex. Queer sexual identities, which involve most or all variants of queer, all concern sex. Queer sexual identities concern sex in that they are identity labels for the kinds of sex practised by such persons. They are easily known and identified by such sexualities or sexual practices. These identities apply to queer

literature. That is, queer literature involves literary politics of sexualities, whereby the literary identity label of 'queer literature' is used to describe or refer to works of arts across the three genres of literature that concern queerness in various regards. That is to say, queer literature has political discourse of and debate on normative versus non-normative sexualities as an essential part and parcel of its thrust. In queer literature, the queer person is the protagonist, while the heterosexual person is the portrayed antagonist. The literary constructions as well as portrayals present a site of hot clashing struggles between homosexuality and heterosexuality as well as the distinct sexual ethics, orientations, norms, values, traditions, identities and politics inherent to each of them. In them, reasons for engaging in or being a person of Lesbianism, Gay, Bisexuality and Transgender (LGBT) sexualities are only portrayed literarily.

With the politics, different movements advancing queer course have emerged overtime. More and more of them are emerging overtime. With it also, the legalisation of queerness and its practices and ethics in different parts of the world had become possible fairly long ago. Be it as it may, it is observed that 'the old equation of power and sexiness still seems to triumph over principles and aesthetics alike' (Spargo 4). Also, the old sexual prejudices still thrive and triumph over the new sexualities, sexes and genders (Besong 66). Yet, queer persons are bent on breaking the uneven in sexuality, sex and gender traditions and politics (Besong 66; Spargo 5). Following the success, many Lesbianism, Gay, Bisexuality and Transgender (LGBT+) people do proudly identify themselves as queer persons. More and more persons have got into queer practice, advocacy, writing, discourse, intellectualism, theorisation, research and politics.

Just as women rose to explore gender difference of considering persons to be either male or female, and profile on gender basis, lesbians and gays were the first to rise against and explore normative sexuality, sex and gender, which are rooted in heterosexuality. They interrogate the normative politics of heterosexuality. Their interrogation keeps affecting change to normative sexuality and gender as well as normative sexual ethics. In challenging these, inclusive of opposing men and women alone categorisation, being straight, normative constructions of sex, gender and identities, among others, new ways have been developed and sustained by queer people and their advocates. The new ways include queer literature, queer theories, queer movements and groups, political and scholastic push for and success in legalisation, and so on. The focus of this study is on queer literature, with specific interests in Nigerian fiction in queer literature, as typified by Akwaeke Emezi in *Vivek Oji* as well as her other queer novels.

Before now, queer literature was also received with contempt, disregard, rejection bids and debates until recently, when things turned around to that end. That is why Nigerian literature in particular and African literature as a whole has only gained entry into queer literature just recently. With the evolving trends in this area of literature, queer literature has now found a place in Nigerian fiction.

Queer literature has now gained a growing number of Nigerian literary artists and scholars, who engage with queer themes. Among them are Akwaeke Emezi, Chimamanda Adichie, Uzodinma Iweala, Chinelo Okparanta, Jude Dibia, Uzodinma Iweala, Chike Frankie Edozien, Unoma Azuah, Romeo Oriogun, and Arinze Ifeakandu. Given the foregoing, it becomes crystal clear that there is a research gap in African/Nigerian queer literature. There is a paucity of literatures on queer(ness) in African/Nigerian queer literature. Given that queer literature is relatively recent, it is very new in African literature as a whole, inclusive of Nigerian literature.

Literary critics are on the divide on queer literature, particularly on whether or not it ought to have a place in the general or traditional normative literature considered incorrupt. While some critics advocate, support and defend queer practices using queer literature of all genres, the others counter them with severe criticism, faulting the practices and condemning queer literary works as well as their inclusion in conventional literature. Akwaeke Emezi does the former. She writes on, projects, promotes, advocates, supports, defends and even reconstructs queer(ness) along with all that concerns queer practices using queer literature. In her queer literary works, she makes use of the prose fiction genre of literature. Emezi's fictitious texts portray sexual perversion. Here, only her *The Death of Vivek Oji* will be explored to demonstrate gender and sex are perverted in the contemporary society and portrayed in prose fiction of queer literature.

Sex, a sacred activity, offered to humanity by divinity, is now perverted in various ways (Besong and Robert 232; Undiyaundeye and Inakwu 262). It has become a means of gratification of lust, and getting relived of drugs and stress, and a commercial venture for financial, material and even power gains. These days, there are no moral and social considerations of and commitment to sex. The minds of most persons in contemporary time is so polluted and full of vices that sex is one of those evils perverted on daily basis in various regards, both overtly and covertly. In the text under study, the author shows through the characters of Vivek, among others, that sex ought to be enjoyed without any regulation, as regulating sexual acts amounts to deprivation or trampling on the sexual rights of the individual(s) involved. The implications of sexual perversion include sexual laxity, immorality, incest, sexual laxity, pervasive rape, lust and cheating, failed married life, frustration, spiritual decay, sexual triviality, nudity and indecent attire, among others. The highly valued chastity, which ladies were applauded and rewarded with special gifts by their spouses and spouses' parents for keeping their virginity for their husbands alone, is now archaic among most members of the contemporary society (Robert, Besong and Dibie 231).

Sexual perversion questions the fruitfulness of post/modernity, as the practices rather call to mind the barrenness of the contemporary society, because of the sexual anarchy that obtains in this age of human existence. Sexual perversion is undoubtedly unethical, immoral, unconventional and a breach of

normative sexual ethics (Besong 66). From modern to post-modern (contemporary) eras, sexual perversion has remained endemic. While most individuals consider sexual perversion as an evil that has to be avoided and those guilty of it should be punished accordingly, a few other people consider it as a worthwhile practice that should be considered normal and allowed to thrive unchecked and without restraining legislations. Sexual perversion is a case and an exercise of sexual immorality. It is a chronic, multifaceted and widespread case of new sexualities.

Sexual perversion is an integral part of queerness (Nkereuwem, Queer Literature and 1). This study is about sexual perversion in the Nigerian fiction, a form of queer literature, as evidenced in Akwaeke Emezi's *Vivek Oji*. Sexual perversion is a form of sexual deviation from normative sexual practice. Although this theme (sexual perversion) is of ultimate concern to gender study and feminism, it is also of concern to the field of literary criticism. This study seeks to engage with the theme from the angle of literary criticism (LC henceforth). Just as feminism examines and interrogates gender issues, literary criticism makes a critical art appreciation of creative works, exposing various themes. LC also appraises gender issues, making an in-depth critique of the issues. That is what this study does herein, as it analyses Emezi's queer novel, *The Death of Vivek Oji*.

Sexual perversion includes all forms of sexual violations, deviations, immorality, homosexuality, both female and male forms of prostitution, machine sex, masturbation, open-air sexual intercourse (at night clubs and open corners of campuses and streets, on farm, etc.), animal to human sexual intercourse, use of objects and technological sexual devices to derive sexual satisfaction, sex alteration (as in transgender and technologically assisted change of embryonic sexual compositions), same-sex sexual practices, and intersex (as in bisexuality). Sexual seduction is one neglected form of sexual perversion. Forced sex and sexual assaults also constitute sexual perversion. Other sexualities (homosexuality), also regarded as gay, lesbianism, bisexuality and Transgender (LGBT), are the peak of sexual perversion. These non-normative sexualities are affirmed to have adverse effects on society, including hampering child's growth and development, and causing instability and teleological issues of sexual identity (Mason, 234).

Just as evidenced in Emezi's *Freshwater* and *The Death of Vivek Oji*, Undiyaundeye and Inakwu rightly observe that 'gays [i.e. LGBTs] of various forms largely lack self-esteem and confidence, because of these ill-practices they engage in' (259). As Eric Besong rightly notes, the contemporary society is characterised by emerging sexualities having new sexual ethics, which are 'brought to fore by homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals, among which are the radical feminists, who indoctrinate many with the practice and continuously push very hard for legalisation and acceptance by all cultures and religions' (66). He points out that 'the rise of new sexual ethics in the contemporary society accounts for the prevalence of sexual laxity [sexual perversion in our parlance], which is non-African and deserves wide attention to curb it' (Besong 66). According to him, 'emerging

sexual ethics became intense with the rise of western feminism, particularly American feminism that brought to place radical feminism' (Besong 66). Lamenting the menace of homosexuality, the peak of contemporary sexual perversion, Eric Besong and Odey Robert argue that 'homosexuality practice adulterates African ethos and sexual ethics; plagues the society with moral decadence; [and] erodes norms, values and sacred institutions' (233).

Of course, that is why most countries of the world incessantly outlaw new sexualities other than heterosexuality (Onuche 91-3; Cloete et al. 9; Okoli and Abdullah 42; Olanrewaju, Chidozie and Olanrewaju 511-512; Besong, 67). Only 27 countries of the world have legalised homosexuality along with same marriage (Besong and Robert 235; Undiyaundeye and Inakwu 253). Out of the 27, only 9 of the 47 African countries have legalised these ungodly practices (Undiyaundeye and Inakwu, 253), with South Africa being the first. South Africa did so basically because of the hard push on the country by the powerful Western nations having close diplomatic ties with the country. Two other factors behind doing so are the (influence of) indigenous whites of the country and the involvement of some members of the nation's elitist class in the practices. The 38 other African countries strongly outlaw homosexuality and trans-humanity. Penalties meted out on offenders include death, imprisonment (of 3 months to above 14 years), stoning to death, lynching, and so on (Undiyaundeye and Inakwu 253).

Sexual perversion is a trending feature of new sexualities that largely obtain and are consistently promoted and legitimised in the Global West (Besong 66; Besong and Robert 234-5; Undiyaundeye and Inakwu 259). Sexual perversion raises various questions about sexuality, as it is obviously a wholesome case of 'sexual violations that degrade human persons' (Egbekpalu 3). As Agbo (27) agrees on ethical *universalisability* in the judgement of all actions that could be considered ethical, sexual perversion is a vice in both African and universal contexts in the strict sense. That is, regardless of the variances in the perception of sexuality and sexual practices, sexual perversion is a vice and a violation of classical ethics, social conventions, cultural norms and values, moral and religious precepts, legal frameworks and political policies on sex.

Heterosexuality is the 'most common view of sexuality, as universal human trait' (Sears 83). It is an indisputable fact that a larger number of the global society upholds heterosexuality and moral sexual practices and the other inconsequential number upholds and advocates the legalisation of other (new) sexualities (gay, lesbianism, bisexuality or intersexuality and transgender). Sexual perversion goes beyond general sexual immorality to the perversion of other sexualities other than heterosexuality, which is a universally acceptable sexuality (Nkereuwem, Being Multiple' and 1). In view of the foregoing, Blackburn, Clark and Nemeth observe that queer novels as well as other genres of queer literature are characterised by 'the disruption of normative notions of families, homes and time' (15).

Queer literature are drama, prose and poetry works that are purely on queerness, which seek global recognition, acceptance and legalisation of queer, and arguing against heterosexuality and normative sexual and gender norms. Queer literature rose to 'erase significant differences among people' of normative and non-normative sexualities with their distinct sexual orientations and ideals (Blackburn, Clark and Nemeth 12). Nevertheless, the differences remain quite glaring and sustained, because those belonging to normative sexuality (heterosexuality) remain opposed to other sexualities and all that concern such sexualities. Those of the non-normative sexualities do not only remain opposed to heterosexuality with its sexual orientations and ideals but also dab it variously, and canvass for legislative backing and more fellows (Besong and Robert 227; Davidso 34-44; de Oliveira and Markendorf 23-21).

As evident in Akwaeze's *The Death of Vivek Oji, Freshwater*, and *Pet*, queer texts avoid a single static ideology about sex and sexuality. Rather, they offer 'multiple and, sometimes, conflicting ideologies' (Blackburn, Clark and Nemeth 15). In the text under study, conflicting ideologies portraying, promoting and defending of queer ideologies are evident. Some of her ideologies are suspicious and challengeable. Characters are naïve and unreliable narrators when their ideologies are bound to be resisted and suspected, though still believable to some extent (Cadden 149-150). Such are the major characters of the Emezi's novel under study. Such narrators' believable and challengeable ideologies usher in multiple voices of the narration (Cadden 150), diversify ideologies and make or prove the queerness of texts (Blackburn, Clark & Nemeth 16).

Sexual Perversion in *The Death of Vivek Oji*

Emezi sustains the tradition of non-chronological narrative, for which the plots are scattered or unarranged. Vivek is brought back home from the university– University of Nigeria, Nsukka. No reason is given or stated in the novel, but from inference, it could be deduced that he is returned home as a result of mental health issues. Osita got admission into Nsukka, while Vivek gained admission into Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The assertion that Vivek had mental issues (before being brought back home from the university by persons not seen or known by his parents) could be understood from his subsequent (mis)behaviour at home. Chika complains to Mary that Vivek does not sleep at night, but rather 'wanders about like a madman' in the room or compound (57).

Some other nights, he either climbs and sits on top of the tree in the compound or sits at the veranda with dogs. Symbolically, he is a lover of pets (57-8). Kavita sends Vivek to Mary in Owerri for church deliverance (80). Vivek ends up beating Mary at the church (80).As he remains at home, not going to school anymore, Kavita remains worried and restricts him social settings and mingling. Vivek tells him mum: You're keeping me in a cage! You think I want to stay in this house every night like a prisoner?' (64).Despite perverting sex with several other characters, he remains unsatisfied with the physical world and longs for the other

world. Vivek finds himself in a community having zero tolerance for non-normative sexualities and genders. It is one that is characterised by homophobia and transphobia.

Emezi engages with the circumstances surrounding Vivek's death, makes sense of them, and champions a new world order against them to overthrow the harsh stereotypical practices that are intolerant to non-straight persons. Although the author does not take up a pedestrian approach to literary construction of the circumstances or themes, she presents them well without complication and represent the characters without sentiments, accord them relevance and makes them uncomplicated dynamic characters. Vivek Oji says the life with which he lives and breathes belongs to his grandmother. Vivek was born with the exact mark his grandmother, Ahunna, had when she was alive (13). Khatri's uncle gave her a charm that she tied around Vivek's neck at childhood. It is made of silver in the image of Ganesh hung from a thin silver chain (47). Vivek is an epitome of family, friendship and identity entrapment.

Vivek battles with accepting himself in terms of his queer identity, and with being accepted by his family and the larger community where they live. He is of 'two-in-one' personality (40).The issues beclouding his identity or the freedom of his identity make him long for the other world. His identity is particularly entrapped by the family or it is perpetually conceal for fear of family intolerance and reaction. That is why he keeps living in part rather than full the real life of his/her sexual identity. From time to time, he unveils his real self to his friends and even tells them not to consider him a 'he' but a 'she'. He wears female clothes and make-ups before them and to their knowledge. On one occasion, Osita admires Vivek, telling him that he is 'beautiful' (11). Osita and Vivek separate, when the former feels embarrassed by what the latter does in one of his blackouts. Vivek usually has blackouts once in a while. When Osita asks Vivek why he experiences blackouts, he said Osita should forget about it; for it is nothing (24). He also tells Osita to forget about how the dotting scars in his ribs came about (59).Upon pressing hard, Vivek discloses to Oista that the scars had been given to him by certain senior students at the boarding school he attended (59).

The above explanation, no doubt, was to clarified Osita that they were not cigarette burns, as he thought and voiced out, when Vivek refused to speak up initially (59).The novel portrays cases of major crimes of sexual assault, incest, hit-and-run, abduction, petty larceny, plagiarism, bar brawling, breaking and entering, and criminal negligence. Among these crimes, sexual assaults and incest are cases of sexual perversion that of concern to this study. Accordingly, in page 6, Chika steps behind Mary, as she cooks and puts his mouth on the back of her neck. That is a case of minor sexual assault. Mary warns him to stop coming to her house, if that is what he comes to her house. Chika heeds the warning and keeps a distance, particularly as he secures a job with a glass factory at Ngwa and stays off Owerri for several months (6). Osita and Elizabeth make out in the boy's quarters of De

Chike's House (31). Thereafter, Osita tells Vivek that he made out with Elizabeth and fought with Tobechukwu (32). Vivek requests that Osita should allow him watch them next time having each other out (33). Osita later agrees (33). He later watches them having each other through glass louvers window (36). He also watches them through the door way (37).

There is no reason given for the foregoing sexual acts. When Somto and Olunne visit Vivek, Olunne admires Vivek, saying out that he is pretty (120). Osita admires him, when he sees Vivek at Maja's house with lipsticks (129). Tobechukwu once saves Vivek from an angry mob (116). Vivek gives Tobechukwu blow job at their boy's quarters (124). At some point in the novel, Osita begins to have feelings for Vivek, his cousin. As the two of get into sexual intercourse with each other, they mindlessly commit incest. Clearly, this depicts sexual perversion, which has a trace to only mere loose sexual desire of having anyone at one's disposal for sexual pleasure, without minding the grave implications of the sexual act. In this case, there is no moral or ethical consideration, because if there is, both of them would rather have it with outsiders– persons outside their family circle. It all started when Osita got infatuated to Vivek, whose new (or rather real queer) appearance, after a long period of being away from each other, is charming (63).

On a particular day, Osita has sex with a Lebanese man (guy) in a hotel in Port-Harcourt. This is a case of gay sexual intercourse, which is done without any reason given for perverting the act. As such, there are no real reasons given for sexual perversion other the mental push for sexual intercourse orchestrated by libidinal or hormonal dispositions. The urge to have sex is a result of libidinal or hormonal dispositions, upon mental conception of sexual act, when a person desires another for sex. It follows that sexual pleasure is what drives sexual urge. Sexual urge can be resisted or quenched. This implies that if a person sees no need for sex, he or she could resist the temptation to have sex. After all, sexual acts are habitual. This implies that sexual habits are taken up and dropped at will by individuals. This point explains why some persons are addicted to sex, while others are not. As clearly evident in the novel, Vivek flirts or perverts sex with his closest and most loving cousin, Osita, and several friends. He succeeds in having sex with Osita, Elizabeth and Juju. Meanwhile, he had previously watched Osita, his first cousin, having sex with Elizabeth. Quite shocking is the fact that Elizabeth is aware of Vivek's blood and personal close relationship with Osita. The same Elizabeth also sleeps with Juju.

In fact, sexual perversion in the novel is more like that of the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah. Juju, the closest person to Vivek, who dresses him in feminine attires, flirts with Vivek, Elizabeth and even Osita. Osita kisses Vivek at Juju's house (136). The night of that very day, Osita has it with Vivek at Maya's house (140). The same Osita once kissed a university student in dark club (guy) (132). He gives Osita blow job (guy) with a club (138). Juju and Elizabeth are lesbian lovers, who double as bisexuals (142). Their respective sexual affairs with Vivek,

Osita and several other characters in the text un/known to the audience prove them to be bisexuals. Vivek visits Juju with his hair plaited (145). Elizabeth is seen kissing Juju (150). Juju kisses Vivek (151). Ebenezer kisses Mama Ben (158). Florence, called Mama Ben, runs a small food shop. Ebenezer, a vulcanizer, is married to Chisom, a business woman. Osinachi is Tobechukwu's mother. She and Chisom are friends.

Also, sexual perversion in the text is displayed by gays and bisexuals in persons of Vivek, Osita and several other male characters. Juju and Elizabeth, who have sex, kiss and flirt with different guys and babes in the text, are lesbians. As lesbian lovers, Juju hides her sexual perversion with Vivek from Elizabeth, unknown to her that Elizabeth also has sexual affairs with Vivek and Osita. Before his demise, Vivek had Tobechukwu once, when she goes to Vivek to verify whether or not he is a gay. Un/fortunately for her, Vivek 'disproved' her by having her in bed. Probably, the intercourse was such that Tobechukwu would doubt the view that Vivek is a gay. That is because almost everyone, if not all, would have and express strong doubt about the gay status of a man who pounces on a woman hard in bed, when she comes to confirm whether or not the man is a gay. The same thing applies to a man, who goes to verify whether or not a woman is truly a lesbian and she turns out to have him harder than most heterosexual women would not do to him in bed.

Vivek's father, De Chika, has an affair with his wife's closest friend, Eloisa. She had interest in him and wished to have long before he finally makes advances on her for sex and have at last. Eloisa is a foreigner married to a Nigerian. After having each other once, they continue. Chika has her in his office many times (113) and in Eloisa's parlour (114). Eloisa, like other foreign women married to Nigerians, is the close friend of Kavita's Vivek's mother. In other words, her friends are mostly other foreigners married to Nigerian husbands. The novel particularly singles out four of the women under the umbrella of 'Naija Wives,' who are all foreigners married to Nigerians. These four friends of Kavita, Vivek's mother, are Eloisa, Rubi, Maja and Rhata. Rubi is Elizabeth's mother. Maja is the mother of Juju. Rhata is the mother of Somto and Olume. Eloisa has two boys, but their names are not mentioned in the text. Charles, Maja's husband, has a second wife, Rhata, outside his wife's knowledge. It is evident from the foregoing narratives that Emezi's portrays complex, wholesome and widespread cases of sexual perversion by both adults and young people of adolescent and youthful ages respectively.

Vivek tells Osita his dream, in which his grandmother tells him to hold as well as keep her life for her (172). Vivek opens up to Osita thus: 'I am never a man to begin with' (140). He narrates that he is Nnemdi (250). He accuses Osita of being ashamed of himself, them, and his queer personality (252). At the market, where the death of Vivek begins, a hullaballoo ensued. In the process, some members of the angry mob attempt to descend on Vivek for dressing and

acting like a woman. While Vivek struggles and stumbles and hits his heel on a stone. He falls and his head strikes on the raised cemented edge of the gutter (253). While being taken to the hospital by Osita, Vivek (now Nnemdi, as he asks to be called) dies on the way to hospital (255). His dead body along with broken head is wrapped in akwete cloth. Upon reaching Vivek's parents' compound and dropping Vivek's corpse at the veranda, Osita kisses Vivek's lips, saying 'I have to go so I don't get caught' (256). Vivek's name is later changed on the tomb stone to: 'VIVEK NNEMDI OJI, Beloved Child' (262).

The last act of sexual perversion in the text is that displayed by Osita to Vivek at death, as he kisses his kills. While this is the most symbolic one after the death of Vivek, his friends and Osita continue to pervert illegitimate sexual acts. For example, it was until after Vivek's death that Osita sleeps with Juju. Yet, continues to flirts with Elizabeth, as a lesbian, and with several guys, as a bisexual. The novelist calls the sexual act or sexual intercourse 'make out,' 'making out' or 'did/do it with' (e.g. 33, 36, 113, 114). Basically, Vivek dies on the day there was a riot at the market along St Michael Road. Osita goes to the market in search of Vivek to avoid being attacked and killed by those would not be able to bear seeing him in female attires. It was in the course of Osita dragging with Vivek over not going into the riot scene that Vivek falls, hits his head and bleeds. While on the way to hospital, Osita stops somewhere on the road and undresses him so they could easily be given a lift to the hospital. A person gives them a lift, but does not reach the hospital. While attempting to further with Vivek to the hospital, he dies.

Osita uses the akwete cloth, which he had used to wrap his broken head to avoid bleeding, to wrap his dead body. After undressing him and removing his silver necklace, Osita gets water from a roadside orange seller and cleans himself. He gets a pair of shirt at #50. He collects a polythene bag and puts the clothes Vivek wore before he died. He later takes the bag to Vivek's grave on his birthday. At the grave, Osita recounts alone how his cousin and lover died. Finally, Juju, Elizabeth and other boys and girls in their friendship crew take Vivek's pictures, which reveal him to be a bisexual (queer) until his death, to his mother, Kavita. They tell her all that they know about Vivek while alive and the revelations he gave them about himself (his queer and mystic personalities). Kavita and Chika did not know their son, Vivek, all through his lifetime. Juju informs Kavita that Vivek had told them that he was a 'he' and a 'she' concurrently and had another name– Nnemdi, his grandmother's name. He had the same scar on the same spot with that of his grandmother, which she had got while on a farm.

Conclusion

It is evident that queer literature as a whole developed slowly and finally reached its peak, because queer identity and practice used to be frowned at. Yet, Nigerian literature has gained entry into global literature very recently– around mid 2000's. The gap had been caused by the common phobia for non-normative

sexualities and genders. Cultural norms and values, beliefs and identity politics behind sexuality and gender construction in society pose serious challenges to queerness and queer literature. Nigerian fiction in queer literature is a recent development and Emezi evidently portrays sexual perversion in the explored novel, as particularly typified by the character of Vivek Oji, among others, who exhibit the different variants of queerness. Basically, sexual perversion obtains in forms of sexual laxities, as evident in *The Death of Vivek Oji*.

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CHAPTER SEVENTY-FOUR

REPOSITIONING TEACHER EDUCATION THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR NIGERIAN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

Teacher education constitutes the foundation upon which the quality and sustainability of any education system rests. The effectiveness of teachers shapes learning outcomes, institutional performance, and long-term national development. In Nigeria, Colleges of Education occupy a central role in preparing teachers for basic and secondary education. Despite this strategic importance, these institutions face persistent and interrelated challenges, including declining student enrollment, deteriorating infrastructure, policy inconsistency, staff demotivation, and diminishing public confidence. Together, these challenges have generated serious concerns about the relevance, effectiveness, and future viability of teacher education in the country.

Existing reform efforts have largely focused on curriculum restructuring, accreditation requirements, and funding mechanisms. While these interventions are important, they have often overlooked leadership as a critical driver of institutional effectiveness and reform sustainability. This omission is consequential. Research in educational leadership consistently demonstrates that policies and resources yield meaningful outcomes only when interpreted and enacted through capable, ethical, and visionary leadership. In contexts characterized by resource constraints and policy instability, leadership assumes even greater significance in shaping institutional direction and outcomes.

This chapter contends that the contemporary crisis confronting Nigerian Colleges of Education is not merely technical or financial but fundamentally a leadership and policy coordination challenge. The decline in enrollment, frequently treated as an isolated phenomenon, is better understood as both a symptom and a consequence of deeper institutional issues, including weak governance structures, fragile professional identity, inconsistent policy signals, and limited leadership capacity. Addressing these challenges therefore requires a deliberate repositioning of teacher education institutions aimed at restoring relevance, credibility, and public trust.

Repositioning, as employed in this paper, denotes a strategic and systemic reorientation rather than incremental adjustment. It involves redefining institutional purpose, strengthening professional norms, and aligning internal practices with societal and policy expectations. Within this framework, transformational leadership provides a useful analytical lens. Transformational leaders articulate compelling visions, inspire collective commitment, foster innovation, and attend to the professional growth of institutional members. Empirical evidence suggests that such leadership is associated with improved organizational culture, staff motivation, and institutional performance across diverse educational contexts.

However, leadership does not operate in isolation. Even the most capable leaders are constrained by incoherent policies, unstable funding regimes, and rigid regulatory environments. Conversely, well-designed policies may fail in the absence of leadership capable of effective implementation. Leadership and policy are therefore mutually reinforcing, and sustainable reform requires attention to both.

Situated within broader scholarly debates on educational leadership and reform, this paper examines how transformational leadership can contribute to repositioning teacher education in Nigeria, with particular reference to Colleges of Education. It explores the conceptual foundations of transformational leadership, analyzes the systemic challenges confronting teacher education institutions, and proposes policy directions aimed at creating enabling environments for sustainable institutional renewal. In doing so, the paper contributes to contemporary discussions on leadership, governance, and professional development in higher education.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Teacher education refers to the structured processes through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and professional identities necessary for effective teaching. It encompasses pre-service preparation, induction support for beginning teachers, and continuous professional development throughout careers. Beyond technical competence in subject matter and pedagogy, teacher education aims to cultivate reflective practitioners who understand the social, cultural, ethical, and political dimensions of their work (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Globally, research consistently demonstrates that the quality of teacher education directly correlates with student learning outcomes, making it a critical determinant of educational effectiveness and a strategic priority for national development.

In Nigeria, teacher education is primarily delivered through Colleges of Education, which award the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), historically the minimum qualification for teaching in basic education. Many of these institutions have evolved to offer degree programs in affiliation with universities, reflecting policy shifts toward higher qualification requirements for teachers. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) regulates these institutions, setting

standards for curriculum content, staffing qualifications, physical facilities, and quality assurance processes. Despite this regulatory framework, systemic challenges persist, undermining the sector's capacity to meet national manpower needs and maintain professional standards that command public confidence.

The historical development of teacher education in Nigeria reveals persistent tensions between expansion and quality, centralization and autonomy, professional ideals and pragmatic constraints. Following independence, rapid expansion of primary education created urgent demand for teachers, leading to proliferation of teacher training colleges and grade two certificate programs. Subsequent reforms upgraded these to Colleges of Education awarding the NCE, but quality remained uneven across institutions. Recent decades have seen policy vacillations regarding minimum qualification requirements, institutional autonomy, and funding mechanisms, creating uncertainty and instability that complicates long-term planning (Arikewuyo, 2009).

Transformational leadership theory provides a robust framework for understanding how leadership can drive institutional renewal in such challenging contexts. Originating in Burns' (1978) distinction between transactional and transforming leadership, the theory was subsequently refined and operationalized by Bass (1985) and later elaborated by Bass and Riggio (2006). Transformational leadership is characterized by four core dimensions that distinguish it from more conventional management approaches.

First, idealized influence refers to leaders serving as role models whose behavior embodies institutional values and ethical standards. Such leaders gain trust and respect through consistency between espoused values and actual conduct, demonstrating integrity, fairness, and commitment to collective rather than personal interests. In educational contexts, idealized influence is particularly important because institutions are fundamentally normative organizations where professional values and ethical conduct significantly shape organizational culture (Northouse, 2021).

Second, inspirational motivation involves articulating compelling visions of desirable futures and communicating these visions in ways that energize and inspire stakeholders. Transformational leaders create shared meanings, appeal to higher-order needs and values, and foster collective identification with institutional missions. This dimension is crucial in contexts where demoralization and cynicism prevail, as inspiring leadership can revitalize hope and commitment even amid difficult circumstances (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Third, intellectual stimulation encourages creativity, innovation, and critical thinking. Leaders who provide intellectual stimulation challenge conventional assumptions, encourage questioning of established practices, and create psychological safety for experimentation and constructive risk-taking. In teacher education, where pedagogical innovation and adaptation to changing educational

landscapes are essential, intellectual stimulation enables institutions to evolve rather than stagnate (Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

Fourth, individualized consideration recognizes the unique needs, aspirations, and potential of each individual. Leaders demonstrating this quality provide mentoring, coaching, and developmental support tailored to individual circumstances. They create conditions where people feel valued and supported in their professional growth. In Colleges of Education, where faculty often feel overlooked and underappreciated, individualized consideration can significantly enhance morale and motivation (Day & Sammons, 2016).

Empirical research consistently demonstrates the effectiveness of transformational leadership in educational contexts. Meta-analytic reviews reveal significant positive associations between transformational leadership and outcomes including teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, professional learning, instructional quality, and student achievement (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). These relationships hold across diverse national contexts, though specific manifestations vary with cultural, institutional, and policy environments.

In resource-constrained settings characteristic of many African educational systems, transformational leadership becomes particularly important because it leverages intrinsic motivation and collective purpose rather than relying primarily on material incentives that may be unavailable. Research in South Africa, Kenya, and Ghana demonstrates that transformational school leadership can produce significant improvements even when resources remain limited, by maximizing effective use of existing resources, building staff capacity, and cultivating supportive organizational cultures (Bush, 2020). This finding has important implications for Nigerian Colleges of Education, which typically operate under severe budgetary constraints.

However, transformational leadership theory has faced critiques that warrant acknowledgment. Some scholars argue that it insufficiently attends to power dynamics, potentially masking how charismatic authority can be exercised in manipulative or self-serving ways (Tourish, 2013). Others note that the theory's individualistic focus on leader traits and behaviors may underestimate the importance of distributed leadership and collective agency (Harris, 2014). Additionally, context-specificity matters; leadership practices effective in one setting may not transfer directly to others with different cultural norms, institutional histories, or policy frameworks.

These critiques suggest that transformational leadership should be understood not as a universal panacea but as a valuable framework that requires adaptation to specific contexts and complementarity with other leadership approaches. In Nigerian Colleges of Education, effective leadership likely requires combining transformational elements with instructional leadership focused on pedagogical quality, strategic leadership attending to external positioning and

resource mobilization, and distributed leadership fostering collective responsibility and shared decision-making.

Moreover, leadership effectiveness depends fundamentally on policy contexts that either enable or constrain leadership action. Even highly capable transformational leaders cannot unilaterally resolve problems rooted in inadequate funding, incoherent policies, or dysfunctional regulatory systems. This reality underscores the necessity of examining both leadership dynamics and policy frameworks in any serious effort to reposition teacher education.

Teacher Education in Nigeria: Contemporary Challenges

Nigerian Colleges of Education confront multiple interconnected challenges that undermine their capacity to fulfill their mandate of preparing competent, committed, and reflective teachers for the nation's schools. Understanding these challenges in their complexity and interdependence is essential for identifying appropriate interventions.

Declining enrollment represents perhaps the most visible crisis. Over the past fifteen years, applications to Colleges of Education have dropped dramatically. Data from the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) reveals that between 2010 and 2023, first-choice applications to Colleges of Education declined by approximately 60 percent, even as total tertiary education applications increased (Adebayo, 2020). This trend creates existential threats for many institutions, leading to underutilized facilities, reduced tuition revenues, and difficulties justifying budgetary allocations to government.

Several factors drive this enrollment crisis. Most fundamentally, the NCE is widely perceived as a lower-status qualification compared to university degrees, despite official pronouncements of equivalence. This perception reflects deeply embedded social hierarchies that privilege university credentials and the reality that career opportunities and earning potential differ significantly between NCE and degree holders. Prospective students and their families make rational calculations that university education offers better returns on investment, even when access is more competitive and costly.

Second, teaching as a profession suffers from low social prestige and poor remuneration relative to other graduate occupations. Teachers, particularly those in public schools, frequently experience delayed salary payments, inadequate benefits, poor working conditions, and limited autonomy. These conditions make teaching unattractive to ambitious young people, who increasingly pursue careers in business, technology, or professions such as law and medicine. The decline in teaching's social status creates a vicious cycle wherein teacher education attracts weaker candidates, producing graduates whose performance reinforces negative perceptions of the profession (Ololube, 2013).

Third, limited career advancement opportunities within teaching discourage long-term commitment. Promotion processes are often slow, arbitrary, or mired in

bureaucracy. Opportunities for specialization, leadership roles, or transition into educational administration remain constrained. Many teachers perceive their careers as dead-end trajectories with limited room for growth or recognition. This perception extends to prospective teachers, discouraging enrollment in teacher education programs.

Infrastructural deficits further constrain institutional effectiveness. Many Colleges of Education operate with inadequate physical facilities that undermine quality training. Classrooms are often overcrowded, poorly ventilated, and lacking basic teaching aids. Libraries contain outdated materials and insufficient current resources, limiting access to contemporary scholarship. Laboratories for science education are poorly equipped or non-functional, severely restricting hands-on experimentation essential for developing practical competence. Information and communication technology infrastructure remains inadequate, with unreliable internet connectivity and insufficient computers for student use (Obioma, 2019).

Student accommodation presents acute challenges. Hostels are typically overcrowded, with students sometimes sleeping four or six to rooms designed for two. Sanitation facilities are often inadequate and poorly maintained. These conditions create environments unconducive to serious academic work and expose students to health and security risks. While some students resort to off-campus housing, this often means additional financial burdens and long commutes that interfere with academic activities.

These infrastructural gaps reflect chronic underfunding but also point to weak institutional planning, inefficient resource utilization, and sometimes outright corruption in procurement processes. Without modern, functional facilities, Colleges of Education cannot provide the quality of training that contemporary teaching demands, particularly regarding technology integration, scientific inquiry, and professional practice.

Policy inconsistency compounds these challenges, creating uncertainty and undermining long-term planning. Over the past two decades, teacher education in Nigeria has experienced frequent policy shifts regarding minimum qualification requirements, curriculum standards, institutional autonomy, and funding mechanisms. The transition from NCE as a terminal qualification to requirements for degree-level credentials introduced confusion and disruption. While ostensibly aimed at elevating professional standards, implementation lacked clarity regarding timelines, transition arrangements, and implications for existing NCE programs and graduates (Arikewuyo, 2009).

Curriculum reforms, while often well-intentioned, have sometimes proceeded without adequate consultation or piloting. The shift toward competency-based teacher education, for instance, required fundamental changes in assessment practices and teaching approaches, yet institutions received limited support for capacity building to implement these changes effectively. Accreditation standards

periodically change, requiring costly adjustments that strain already limited institutional resources.

Funding mechanisms remain ad hoc and unpredictable. Unlike federal universities with more stable appropriations, many state-owned Colleges of Education experience chronic delays in subvention releases, creating cash flow crises that disrupt operations. The absence of predictable, formula-based funding makes financial planning nearly impossible and forces institutions into reactive short-term management rather than strategic long-term development.

Public confidence in teacher education has significantly eroded, creating reputational challenges that affect recruitment, graduate employment, and stakeholder support. Media reports frequently highlight problems such as examination malpractice, unemployed graduates, and perceived declining standards. While some criticisms reflect genuine problems requiring attention, others stem from sensationalism or inadequate understanding of teacher education realities. Regardless of validity, negative perceptions become self-fulfilling when they discourage quality candidates from enrolling and employers from preferentially hiring College of Education graduates.

Restoring public trust requires not only genuine improvements in quality and outcomes but also effective communication of institutional achievements, transparent accountability mechanisms, and strategic positioning that highlights the distinctive contributions of teacher education to national development (Ololube, 2013). Many institutions lack capacity for effective public relations and strategic communication, allowing negative narratives to dominate public discourse.

Staff motivation and retention present critical challenges affecting institutional capacity. Faculty in Colleges of Education typically face heavy teaching loads, sometimes exceeding twenty contact hours weekly, leaving limited time for research, curriculum development, or mentorship of students. Professional development opportunities are scarce, particularly for staff in institutions located outside major urban centers. Access to research funding remains extremely limited, and library resources inadequate for serious scholarship.

Salaries are frequently delayed, sometimes by several months, creating severe financial hardship for staff members. Promotion processes, while formally merit-based, are sometimes perceived as biased, politicized, or subject to favoritism. These conditions produce demoralization, cynicism, and high attrition rates as qualified staff seek better opportunities in universities, international organizations, or careers outside education altogether (Teferra, 2019). The departure of experienced faculty weakens institutional memory, disrupts program continuity, and reduces the mentoring capacity needed to support junior colleagues and student teachers.

Governance structures in some institutions suffer from over-centralization, limited transparency, and weak accountability. When decision-making is concentrated in a few hands without meaningful consultation or checks and balances, it breeds

suspicion, resistance, and inefficiency. Some institutional leaders exercise authority in authoritarian ways that stifle initiative, discourage dissent, and reward sycophancy over competence. Others face interference from external political actors who impose appointments or decisions based on patronage rather than institutional interests.

Ethical lapses, including financial mismanagement and favoritism in appointments or promotions, further undermine trust and morale. While many leaders serve with integrity and dedication, instances of corruption receive disproportionate attention and damage the reputation of the entire sector. Strengthening governance requires not only individual ethical commitment but also systemic reforms that promote transparency, participation, and accountability (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Gender dynamics in leadership and staffing also warrant attention. While teaching is predominantly female at basic education levels, Colleges of Education exhibit more balanced gender ratios among faculty, and women increasingly occupy senior leadership positions, particularly in southern Nigeria. This represents progress toward gender equity in educational leadership. However, ensuring that leadership practices support all staff equitably, regardless of gender, and that career advancement opportunities remain merit-based requires ongoing vigilance.

These challenges are systemic, deeply entrenched, and mutually reinforcing. Declining enrollment exacerbates funding constraints, which worsen infrastructural deficits and staff morale, which in turn undermines quality and public confidence, further discouraging enrollment. Breaking this vicious cycle requires comprehensive interventions addressing both institutional leadership practices and policy frameworks simultaneously.

Transformational Leadership and Institutional Repositioning

Transformational leadership offers a powerful framework for addressing the challenges facing Nigerian Colleges of Education. By inspiring stakeholders, building institutional capacity, and fostering cultures of excellence and accountability, transformational leaders can catalyze meaningful repositioning efforts that transcend merely managing decline and instead pursue institutional renewal.

Vision building stands at the core of transformational leadership and represents the starting point for repositioning. Leaders must articulate clear, compelling, and contextually appropriate visions that define what the institution aspires to become, why that aspiration matters for stakeholders and society, and how collective efforts can realize it. For Colleges of Education, such visions might emphasize becoming centers of pedagogical excellence that produce reflective, innovative, and committed teachers; creating communities of scholarly inquiry where faculty and students engage collaboratively in research on teaching and learning; or serving as models of institutional effectiveness and ethical leadership within Nigerian higher education.

A well-articulated vision serves multiple functions. It provides direction, helping stakeholders understand institutional priorities and how their individual efforts contribute to larger purposes. It motivates by appealing to higher-order needs and values, inspiring commitment beyond narrow self-interest. It creates identity, fostering collective identification with institutional missions and pride in belonging. It guides decision-making, providing criteria for evaluating options and allocating resources (Northouse, 2021).

However, vision building is not merely rhetorical exercise. Effective visions must be grounded in realistic assessment of institutional capacities and environmental constraints while simultaneously stretching beyond current realities toward desirable futures. They must resonate with stakeholder values and aspirations rather than being imposed top-down. This requires genuine consultation and participatory processes that allow faculty, students, administrative staff, and external partners to contribute to vision formulation and feel ownership of resulting directions.

Leaders who practice idealized influence model this inclusive approach, demonstrating through their conduct the values they espouse. They engage transparently, listen actively, acknowledge limitations honestly, and share credit generously. By embodying integrity and fairness, they build trust that makes others willing to follow even through difficult changes. In Nigerian Colleges of Education, where cynicism born of broken promises and unfulfilled reforms runs deep, rebuilding trust through consistent ethical leadership becomes foundational for any repositioning effort (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Staff motivation and capacity building constitute another critical dimension of transformational leadership. Institutional success depends fundamentally on having motivated, competent, and empowered faculty and staff. This requires creating supportive work environments, providing professional development opportunities, recognizing contributions fairly, and involving staff meaningfully in decisions affecting their work.

In Nigerian Colleges of Education, where faculty often feel undervalued, overburdened, and disconnected from institutional leadership, transformational leaders who demonstrate individualized consideration can make significant differences. This might involve advocating forcefully with government for improved remuneration and timely salary payments, reducing unnecessary bureaucratic requirements that consume faculty time without adding value, facilitating access to research funding through partnerships or internal seed grants, creating structured mentorship programs pairing junior and senior faculty, supporting participation in professional conferences and workshops, or simply demonstrating genuine interest in faculty members' professional growth and personal wellbeing.

Research demonstrates that when faculty feel supported and valued, they invest more fully in their work, persist through difficulties, and become agents of institutional improvement rather than passive or resistant employees (Day &

Sammons, 2016). Transformational leaders understand that capacity building is not optional or secondary but central to repositioning efforts. They allocate resources accordingly and measure success partly by growth in faculty capabilities and satisfaction.

Intellectual stimulation encourages innovation and continuous improvement, challenging conventional practices and creating cultures where questioning, experimentation, and constructive risk-taking are valued. In teacher education, where pedagogical approaches must evolve to address changing educational contexts and student needs, intellectual stimulation becomes particularly important.

Leaders can foster intellectual stimulation in multiple ways. They might establish teaching innovation grants that provide small amounts of funding and release time for faculty to develop and pilot new instructional approaches. They could create regular forums where faculty present and discuss their teaching experiments and action research findings. They might bring in external speakers or facilitate study groups examining contemporary literature on teacher education. They could encourage and reward faculty who integrate technology creatively, develop community partnerships for practice-based learning, or design assessment methods that better capture student competencies.

Critically, intellectual stimulation requires psychological safety where people feel free to propose ideas, admit mistakes, and learn from failures without fear of ridicule or punishment. In hierarchical cultures characteristic of many Nigerian institutions, creating such safety requires deliberate leadership effort to model vulnerability, celebrate learning from failure, and respond constructively rather than punitively when experiments don't succeed as hoped (Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

Quality assurance and accountability represent essential elements of institutional repositioning, though these must be pursued through developmental rather than purely punitive approaches. Transformational leaders establish clear standards for teaching, research, and service, while implementing transparent evaluation systems and using data constructively to inform decision-making and improvement efforts.

This includes regular curriculum reviews ensuring relevance and currency, classroom observations and teaching portfolios that support instructional improvement, tracking of graduate employment and performance that provides feedback on program effectiveness, and transparent reporting of institutional performance on key indicators. Such quality assurance builds credibility with external stakeholders including government, accrediting agencies, employers, and the public. It also creates internal cultures where quality is genuinely valued and continuous improvement becomes embedded in organizational routines rather than merely responding to external pressures (Obioma, 2019).

However, quality assurance must avoid becoming excessively bureaucratic or punitive, which can produce compliance behavior, gaming of metrics, and demoralization rather than genuine improvement. Transformational leaders frame

quality assurance as collective responsibility for ensuring students receive excellent preparation, rather than as surveillance or judgment of individual faculty. They create systems that provide formative feedback and support for improvement alongside summative evaluation.

Building strategic partnerships extends institutional capacity and enhances relevance beyond what any institution can achieve in isolation. Transformational leaders actively cultivate relationships with schools where graduates will teach, government education agencies, civil society organizations engaged in educational development, private sector entities that might provide resources or internship opportunities, international institutions offering expertise or collaborative possibilities, and other Colleges of Education for peer learning and resource sharing.

Such partnerships can provide multiple benefits. Partnerships with innovative schools create high-quality practice sites for student teachers while exposing faculty to contemporary classroom realities. Collaborations with education ministries can align preparation programs with current policy priorities and create pathways for graduate employment. Partnerships with NGOs might bring resources, technical expertise, or opportunities to participate in educational reform initiatives. International collaborations can facilitate faculty exchanges, joint research, curriculum development support, and access to broader networks (Marginson, 2018).

However, partnerships require careful cultivation and management. They must offer genuine mutual benefit rather than being extractive or one-sided. They require ongoing communication, clarification of expectations, and adjustment as circumstances change. Transformational leaders invest time and effort in relationship building, demonstrate reliability and integrity that makes others want to partner, and create organizational structures that sustain partnerships beyond individual personalities.

Despite the power of transformational leadership, it faces real constraints in poorly designed policy environments. Leaders cannot unilaterally resolve chronic underfunding, overcome dysfunctional regulatory systems, or compensate for incoherent government policies that create uncertainty and instability. The most capable transformational leader struggles when faculty salaries go unpaid for months, infrastructure crumbles from neglect, or regulations change unpredictably.

This reality underscores the necessity of complementary policy reforms that create enabling environments where effective leadership can flourish. Leadership and policy must work synergistically, with leaders advocating for better policies while making maximal use of existing policy spaces, and policymakers creating frameworks that empower rather than constrain capable leadership.

Policy Directions for Nigerian Colleges of Education

Repositioning teacher education requires coordinated policy interventions across multiple domains. While transformational institutional leadership drives

internal change, policy frameworks shape the broader environment determining what is possible. This section proposes six strategic policy directions, recognizing that these are interdependent and require coherent implementation rather than piecemeal adoption.

First, governance reforms should enhance institutional autonomy while strengthening accountability through transparent mechanisms. Many Colleges of Education currently operate under excessive bureaucratic control that stifles innovation and responsiveness. Simple decisions regarding curriculum adjustments, staff recruitment, or resource reallocation often require multiple external approvals, creating delays and frustrations. This over-regulation reflects legitimate concerns about accountability but achieves it through process controls that actually impede effectiveness.

Alternative governance models would grant institutions greater autonomy in operational matters including curriculum design within framework guidelines, staff recruitment and promotion decisions, internal budget allocation, partnership development, and program innovation. Such autonomy enables institutions to respond to local contexts, pursue distinctive missions, and compete based on quality rather than merely complying with uniform regulations.

However, autonomy must be balanced with robust accountability that ensures quality and prevents mismanagement. Accountability mechanisms might include regular external reviews by qualified peers assessing institutional performance against stated missions and national standards, transparent public reporting of key performance indicators including graduate employment rates, employer satisfaction, research productivity, and financial health, stakeholder participation in governance through councils including representatives of faculty, students, alumni, employers, and community members, and performance-based consequences where institutions demonstrating consistent excellence receive rewards including additional funding or regulatory flexibility, while those with persistent problems face interventions or sanctions (Arikewuyo, 2009).

This shift from process control to performance accountability requires building evaluation capacity, developing reliable metrics, and establishing consequences systems that incentivize improvement without being excessively punitive. It also requires trusting institutional leaders to act responsibly, which in turn requires selecting leaders based on merit rather than political patronage.

Second, sustainable funding models must replace ad hoc appropriations that create planning difficulties and operational instability. The current system, where many Colleges of Education depend entirely on unpredictable government releases, makes rational financial planning impossible and forces institutions into short-term survival mode rather than strategic development.

Several reforms could improve funding sustainability. Dedicated education taxes earmarked specifically for teacher education, with portions allocated through transparent formula-based mechanisms accounting for enrollment, program costs,

and performance, would provide predictable revenue streams. Performance-based funding components that reward institutions demonstrating improvements in graduate quality, research productivity, or community engagement could incentivize excellence without punishing institutions serving disadvantaged populations if designed carefully with value-added rather than absolute performance measures.

Institutions should also be empowered and supported to diversify revenue sources beyond government appropriations. This might include generating income through consultancy services to schools or education agencies, offering professional development programs for in-service teachers on cost-recovery basis, developing productive partnerships with private sector, establishing alumni giving programs, and creating modest endowments through long-term fundraising. However, revenue diversification should supplement rather than replace adequate public funding, and regulations should not create perverse incentives for institutions to neglect core teaching and research missions in pursuit of commercial activities (Ololube, 2013).

Funding reforms must also address inequities. Institutions in less developed regions or states often face double disadvantage of serving populations with fewer resources while receiving lower government support. Formula-based funding should include equity components ensuring institutions serving disadvantaged populations receive sufficient resources to provide quality programs.

Third, curriculum reforms should align teacher preparation with contemporary educational demands while remaining flexible enough for local adaptation. Nigeria's education system faces challenges including large class sizes requiring differentiated instruction strategies, linguistic diversity necessitating multilingual pedagogies, technological changes demanding digital literacy and ICT integration skills, inclusive education commitments requiring competencies for supporting learners with special needs, 21st century skills emphasis including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving, and climate change and sustainability imperatives.

Teacher education curricula must equip graduates to navigate these realities effectively. This requires regular, evidence-informed curriculum reviews involving multiple stakeholders including practicing teachers, school administrators, Ministry of Education officials, subject matter experts, and students. Reviews should examine both breadth and depth, ensuring comprehensive coverage while avoiding superficial treatment of numerous disconnected topics.

Curriculum should balance theoretical foundations with practical applications, emphasizing pedagogical content knowledge specific to subjects and grade levels rather than generic teaching methods. Greater emphasis on field experiences and practice teaching, with quality supervision and structured reflection opportunities, strengthens the theory-practice nexus. Integration of technology throughout curricula, not merely as separate ICT courses, prepares teachers to use digital tools meaningfully in their teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Importantly, curriculum frameworks should provide guidance while allowing institutional flexibility for adaptation to local contexts and innovation. Overly prescriptive national curricula stifle innovation and prevent institutions from developing distinctive strengths. Framework approaches that specify learning outcomes and core content while permitting varied pedagogical approaches and local examples balance standardization with innovation.

Fourth, career incentives and professional development pathways should make teaching attractive to talented individuals and support career-long growth. This requires coordinated reforms spanning initial preparation, induction, continuing professional development, and career progression.

Competitive entry-level salaries for teachers, comparable to other graduate occupations, are essential for recruitment. Current salary structures that place teachers well below comparable professionals discourage entry and retention. While government fiscal constraints limit possibilities, creative solutions might include housing allowances, student loan forgiveness programs for teachers, scholarship programs with service commitments, and non-monetary benefits including healthcare, retirement security, and sabbatical opportunities.

Clear career progression pathways with transparent promotion criteria and timely reviews provide motivation and recognition for excellent performance. Opportunities for specialization, whether in particular subjects, pedagogical approaches, curriculum development, or educational leadership, enable teachers to develop expertise and take on diverse responsibilities over careers.

Continuous professional development should be accessible, relevant, and supportive of teacher growth rather than being perfunctory compliance exercises. This might include school-based learning communities where teachers collaborate on instructional improvement, subject-specific networks facilitated by Colleges of Education or professional associations, online courses and resources accessible despite geographic constraints, and sabbatical opportunities for experienced teachers to pursue advanced degrees or engage in intensive professional renewal (Adebayo, 2020).

For faculty in Colleges of Education, similar incentives are needed. Competitive salaries, predictable promotion processes, research support, professional development opportunities, and recognition of excellence in teaching, research, and service all contribute to attracting and retaining qualified academics who can effectively prepare future teachers.

Fifth, regulatory frameworks should balance quality assurance with institutional flexibility, shifting from purely compliance-focused inspection toward developmental evaluation that supports institutional improvement. The NCCE plays vital roles in maintaining standards, but overly prescriptive regulations can stifle innovation and create bureaucratic burdens that consume resources without adding value.

Regulatory approaches might emphasize outcomes rather than inputs, focusing on what graduates know and can do rather than merely whether institutions have specified resources or follow prescribed processes. Accreditation processes could become more developmental, with peer reviewers working collaboratively with institutions to identify strengths, diagnose challenges, and develop improvement plans. Multi-year accreditation cycles with interim check-ins replace annual inspections that create constant anxiety without necessarily improving quality.

The NCCE might also facilitate capacity-building workshops, convene communities of practice where institutional leaders and faculty share innovations, develop resources supporting quality improvement, and recognize exemplary practices rather than only identifying deficiencies. Such approaches position regulation as support for quality rather than mere policing (Obioma, 2019).

Regulatory frameworks should also address equity, ensuring institutions serving disadvantaged populations receive support rather than punishment for challenges beyond their control, while still maintaining standards and accountability.

Sixth, policies should promote collaboration among teacher education institutions, fostering networks for resource sharing, joint research, collective advocacy, and peer learning. Currently, Colleges of Education often operate in isolation, viewing each other primarily as competitors rather than potential partners. This isolation limits learning from successful innovations, duplicates effort, and weakens collective voice in policy discussions.

Regional consortia of Colleges of Education, possibly organized geographically or thematically, could coordinate professional development for faculty, share specialized facilities or expertise, develop collaborative research programs, engage jointly with government and other stakeholders, and create economies of scale for resource-intensive activities. Such consortia, supported by government and professional associations, could significantly enhance institutional capacity while building professional community among faculty across institutions (Marginson, 2018).

Additionally, national policies should support systematic research on teacher education, creating evidence base for continuous improvement. Currently, research capacity remains weak and fragmented. Dedicated funding for teacher education research, creation of research centers with stable support, and requirements that policy reforms be preceded by pilot studies and followed by rigorous evaluation would strengthen the knowledge base informing practice and policy.

Finally, policies must address the status and perception of teaching as a profession through public campaigns, media engagement, national awards, and symbolic recognition. When teaching is genuinely respected and valued societally, more talented individuals pursue teacher education, creating virtuous cycles of quality improvement.

These policy directions are fundamentally interdependent. Governance reforms without adequate funding remain symbolic. Curriculum innovations without career incentives fail to attract quality candidates. Quality assurance without supportive professional development becomes punitive rather than developmental. Comprehensive, coordinated policy action across all these domains simultaneously is essential for meaningful repositioning of teacher education.

Implications for Educational Leadership Practice

The analysis presented in this paper carries important implications for institutional leaders in Nigerian Colleges of Education, policymakers responsible for teacher education, and other stakeholders committed to educational quality.

For institutional leaders, the foremost implication is the imperative to embrace genuinely transformational approaches that inspire, empower, and build capacity rather than merely managing routine operations. This requires courage to articulate compelling visions even in difficult circumstances, commitment to ethical conduct that builds trust, investment in staff development and wellbeing, creation of psychologically safe environments where innovation is encouraged, establishment of fair and transparent systems for evaluation and decision-making, and persistent advocacy for policy reforms and resources that institutions need.

Transformational leadership is demanding, requiring sustained effort, emotional intelligence, political skill, and resilience in face of setbacks. It also requires self-awareness and willingness to grow. Leaders must seek feedback, engage in reflection, participate in professional development, and model the learning orientation they want to cultivate institutionally. They should build leadership teams rather than concentrating all authority personally, distributing responsibilities and developing successors.

Institutional leaders must also become effective advocates, engaging strategically with policymakers, media, employers, alumni, and other stakeholders to communicate the importance of teacher education, demonstrate institutional achievements, acknowledge challenges honestly while sharing improvement efforts, and articulate resource needs and policy changes that would enable better performance. Repositioning is not solely internal institutional project but requires shifting broader narratives and securing external support.

For policymakers at federal and state levels, the implications center on recognizing that sustainable improvement requires systemic thinking and long-term commitment. Quick fixes, ad hoc interventions, and policy pronouncements without implementation support have proven insufficient. Instead, policymakers should adopt coherent, evidence-informed strategies that address governance, funding, curriculum, career incentives, and regulatory frameworks simultaneously and consistently over time.

This requires genuine consultation with practitioners rather than imposing reforms designed in isolation. It requires drawing on research evidence about what

works in teacher education globally while adapting solutions to Nigerian realities rather than importing models uncritically. It requires patience and persistence, recognizing that meaningful change in complex systems takes years not months. It also requires accountability, with policymakers subject to evaluation regarding whether policies achieve intended outcomes and willingness to adjust when evidence suggests current approaches are failing.

Policymakers should recognize that effective policy implementation depends fundamentally on capable institutional leadership. Thus, policies supporting leadership development such as training programs for institutional heads, mentorship networks connecting experienced and emerging leaders, transparent merit-based selection processes for leadership positions, and succession planning frameworks all represent strategic investments in teacher education quality. When institutions are led by competent, visionary, and ethical leaders, policy intentions become more likely to be realized effectively.

For faculty and staff in Colleges of Education, implications include embracing agency and collective responsibility rather than waiting passively for external solutions. While systemic problems require policy-level responses, individual and collective professional commitment makes crucial differences. Faculty can pursue excellence in teaching despite resource constraints, engage in scholarship and innovation within existing possibilities, participate constructively in institutional governance and decision-making, mentor students and junior colleagues generously, and advocate collectively through professional associations for better conditions and policies.

Professional associations of teacher educators should play more active roles in setting professional standards, facilitating peer learning, conducting and disseminating research on teacher education, engaging with policymakers to inform reforms, and holding both institutions and government accountable for quality. Strong professional communities support individual practitioners while advancing collective interests.

For students in Colleges of Education, the implications involve active engagement as partners in quality improvement rather than merely passive recipients. Students can demand quality teaching and support, provide constructive feedback on programs and instruction, participate in governance structures where opportunities exist, develop professional identities and commitments during preparation, and advocate for professional respect and proper conditions as they enter teaching careers.

Employers of teachers, including government education agencies and private schools, should recognize their stakes in quality teacher preparation and engage accordingly. This might involve providing quality practice teaching sites with good mentor teachers, participating in curriculum reviews to ensure relevance to school realities, hiring graduates preferentially from programs demonstrating quality, providing feedback to institutions about graduate performance, and supporting

beginning teachers through structured induction programs that build on preparation.

Finally, communities and society broadly should value education and teaching more genuinely. When teaching is respected as demanding professional work requiring high-level expertise, when effective teachers are celebrated publicly, when educational excellence is prioritized in political discourse and resource allocation, and when families and communities support rather than undermine teachers' authority and professional judgment, the profession becomes more attractive and teacher education more valued.

Conclusion

Teacher education remains a decisive factor in the quality and sustainability of Nigeria's education system. The challenges confronting Colleges of Education, including declining enrollment, infrastructural inadequacies, policy inconsistency, and eroding public confidence, are symptomatic of deeper leadership and governance issues that have accumulated over time. Addressing these challenges requires more than episodic reforms or administrative adjustments. It demands a fundamental rethinking of how teacher education institutions are led, supported, and positioned within the broader educational system.

This chapter has argued that transformational leadership, when situated within coherent and supportive policy frameworks, offers a viable pathway for repositioning teacher education in Nigeria. By emphasizing vision, ethical conduct, professional development, innovation, and collective responsibility, transformational leadership can contribute to renewed institutional purpose and strengthened professional identity. However, leadership effectiveness is ultimately constrained or enabled by policy environments. Sustainable improvement therefore depends on the alignment of leadership practice with governance structures, funding mechanisms, regulatory systems, and career incentive frameworks that support institutional autonomy while ensuring accountability.

The analysis highlights the interdependence of leadership and policy in shaping institutional outcomes. Effective leadership can amplify the impact of sound policies, just as coherent policies can enhance the effectiveness of capable leaders. Conversely, misalignment between leadership capacity and policy design undermines reform efforts and perpetuates systemic weaknesses. Recognizing and addressing this interdependence is essential for meaningful repositioning of teacher education.

Beyond the Nigerian context, the issues examined in this paper resonate with broader challenges facing teacher education systems in many developing societies. The Nigerian experience thus offers insights into the conditions under which teacher education institutions can be revitalized through leadership that is both contextually grounded and ethically informed.

Ultimately, the future of Nigeria's education system is inseparable from the quality of its teachers, and the quality of teachers depends on the effectiveness of

teacher education institutions. Repositioning Colleges of Education is therefore not merely an institutional concern but a national imperative. Achieving this goal requires sustained commitment, principled leadership, supportive policy environments, and
collective engagement across all levels of the education system.

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CHAPTER SEVENTY-FIVE

GENDER ROLES, LEADERSHIP IMBALANCE AND DYNAMICS IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract
This chapter explored gender roles and leadership dynamics in tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria with a view to establishing leadership perspectives of both female and their male counterparts. Concepts of gender as well as leadership dynamics were reviewed and emphasis placed on their modes of application in real life situations. Further attempts were made to critically dissect the role played by gender in the course of leadership as it relates to tertiary educational institution in the Nigerian society. The positions and contributions of female and male institutional heads were considered peri passu with the former having less participation in leadership of such establishments. Some key suggestions were raised as ways of addressing the gap identified in gender equity as it impacts the distribution of leadership positions across genders in tertiary institutions in Nigeria to mitigating imbalance in the distribution of leadership roles.
Key words: *Gender roles, leadership imbalance, dynamics and tertiary institutions.*

Introduction
Significantly, gender roles tend to affect leadership dynamics in Nigerian educational institutions across all strata. In spite of women's improved involvement and participation in the educational sector, leadership roles such as principals, deans, provosts, rectors and vice chancellors are still dominated by men. This reflects the sustained cultural norms that are highly rooted in an age long patriarchal system across various cultures in Nigeria where women are generally considered as weaker

specie especially when it comes to controlling positions of authority in tertiary institutions and other high-profile offices (Omotoso, 2020).

The issue of gender and its associated roles have become a key subject of discuss at the global perspective with different societies adopting what she considers functional and appropriate for the growth and development of her society. Gender roles tilts towards actions and inactions, expectant of male and female members of society. There have been recorded cases of differential analysis on gender roles with the male sex taken upper hands in terms of assuming leadership positions and rendering the expected services (Kim & Horowitz, 2015). Performing assigned responsibilities and promoting high impact success in human as well as capital development are often within the purview of most leaders.

Leadership studies in the past were focused more on men than women but some recent studies directed to women and leadership roles however, found that women are better leaders than their male counterparts especially when they that is, women are engaged in high levels of employment (Minelgaite & Edvardsson, 2012). When most women found themselves in large companies or higher educational institutions, they strive to make significant leadership difference from the men. Strong administrative leadership styles are dependent on a variety of variables such as leaders' conduct, charisma as well as establishing a positive atmosphere within the organization (Sirisookslip et al., 2015).

Interestingly, women scored higher on the subscales of appeal, idealized, impact, inspiration, scholarly incitements, and individualized thought. Unfortunately, the presence of women in senior leadership positions and roles is curiously low (Welch et al., 2012).

Meaning of Gender Roles

The word gender refers to roles, behaviours, identities and expectations which societies associate with being male, female or both, neither nor somewhere along a spectrum. In several cultures nowadays, gender as a concept is considered as a spectrum and not just two categories – male and female.

Omotoso (2020) seems to submit that gender roles and leadership in the tertiary educational institutions significantly underscore institutional practices as they unfold to shape the selection or assignment of leadership positions to men and women in the upper echelon of the educational sector (Okunola, Uzoka, Adetoro & Sule, 2017).

Gender Stereotype and Women's Leadership

At the higher educational levels in Nigeria, leadership continues to favour men more than women as most of the leaders are predominantly men. This trend has persisted over time and still lingers even though more women are updating their educational profiles and getting absorbed at the tertiary educational sectors (Aiston & Kent Fo, 2021). There has been a steady imbalance between men and women in terms of staff engagement and appointments to higher leadership

positions in almost spheres of life. Beginning with primary education, different orientations are given to boys and girls in relation to what the society expects from them. Thus, both sexes become conscious of their societal roles straight away.

Men are associated with possessing good leadership qualities, and many employees think of men as those who have the capacity to control and manage the system effectively.

Therefore, women often face a dilemma, they can either demonstrate stereotypically masculine behaviour and be criticized for not meeting gendered expectations, or agree with the fact that others don't see them as leaders.

Causes of Gender Stereotypes in women Leadership

Okunola, Uzoka, Adetoro and Sule (2017) posit that causes of gender stereotypes in women leadership emanates from different perspectives such as: historical, cultural, social, psychological as well as structural factors.

- ***Historical Power structure:*** Over centuries, leadership roles in politics, business, religion and the military were fully dominated by men. The system of patriarchy kept men as the decision – makers while women were positioned as care – givers. So, the long traditional stand appears to have created by a default situation where the male is seen as born leaders of society (Eagly & Wood, 2012).
- ***Socialisation:*** From childhood, boys and girls are repeatedly encouraged to develop different traits that distinguishes accordingly. Boys are groomed to be assertive, competitive and independent whereas girls are skills of nurturing, cooperative and empathetic in all their dealings. Hence, leadership from the traditional view point is commonly associated with masculinity with serious dominance (Catalyst, 2007).
- ***Cultural Norms and Media Presentation:*** In most cases, media often portrays leaders as male and women in supportive or domestic roles. For example, films, news coverage and advertisements reinforce subtle messages about who looks like a leader with masculine men presented as ideal leader (Eagly & Karau, 2002).
- ***Implicit Bias cum Gender Stereotype:*** Some well- meaning individual members of society tend to hold unconscious biases by linking leadership with men. Stereotype threat. This implies anxiety women may feel when they realise issues of stereotypes about their leadership ability which is likely to affect performance (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006).
- ***Organisational Structures:*** Workplace systems may unintentionally favour men by ways of promoting men more than women using uninterrupted job hours as basis and also evaluation criteria that rewards assertiveness (Ibarra, Ely & Kolb, 2013).
- ***Work-Family Expectations:*** Society often assumes women carry primary caregiving responsibility and this results in doubts about their availability and/or commitment (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007). Maternal leave or motherhood penalties equally contribute to impeding of many women to reaching top leadership positions.

- ***Absence of Role Models:*** There are limited number of women occupying senior leadership roles. So, women lack enough people to look up to as role models and this affects the career progression (Eagly & Carli, 2007).
- ***Political and Economic Systems:*** In some countries, structural barriers like unequal access to education, discriminatory laws or even limited political representation of women are forces that impede gender stereotypes in the tertiary educational institutions leadership.

Way Forward to Gender Imbalance in Tertiary Institutions Leadership

Gender imbalance has remained one of the critical challenges that militates against women's participation in leadership roles at the tertiary institutions level in Nigeria. Leadership across tertiary institutions in Nigeria ranging from Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. Some practical solutions to this menace are provided as follow:

- ***Policy Reforms:*** There is need to introduce clear gender representation targets for governing council, senates, and top leadership positions in order to carry women along.
- ***Transparent Appointments Processes:*** There should be standardised criteria for appointment of vice chancellors, rectors and provosts and deans of faculties. Selection panel should be gender balanced.
- ***Leadership Development & Mentorship:*** Management should endeavour to pair senior female academics with emerging women scholars and also create cross-institutional mentorship network.
- ***Leadership Training for Women:*** Leadership training should be organised for women. Women should also be sponsored for executive leadership programmes, fellowships and management training.

Succession plan workshops need to be organised for women specially directed towards preparing women for top leadership roles.

- ***Institutional Culture Change:*** management should conduct unconscious bias training for staff and governing councils and establish zero tolerance policies for harassment and discrimination.

Conclusion

Gender stereotypes in women's leadership dynamics in general and in tertiary institutions in particular are extremely entrenched in historical divisions of labour, socialisation processes, cultural representations, psychological biases as well as organisational systems. These forces among others, interact to generate structural and perceptual barriers that impede women's chances of advancing into the leadership roles. The issue of stereotypes in women's world of work especially in the educational sector require multifaceted remedies as earlier captured ranging from organisational policy adjustment, increased representation of women,

awareness creation to mitigate biases and achieve gender equity in leadership roles and institutional cultural repositioning.

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