Impacts of Gender Imbalance on Civil Service Productivity: Implications for Counselling

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ABSTRACT
The study investigated the impacts of gender imbalance on civil service in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, where descriptive survey design was adopted. The sampled size was three hundred (300) civil servants made up of one hundred and fifty (150) females and one hundred and fifty (150) males drawn from the Nasarawa State civil service workforce. The instrument used was a questionnaire titled, “Gender Imbalance on Civil Service Productivity (GICSQ)”. Three research questions were designed with three hypotheses to test the variables of the study. The reliability quotient of .82 at .05 level of significance was established, thus clearing the way for the administration of the instrument. The hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical analysis at .05 significant level. The results showed that there was significant difference of responses to gender imbalance on the civil service as well as significant difference of respondents to the rate of gender imbalance on the civil service. The final result indicated no significant difference between respondents as to the consequences of gender imbalance on civil service. Based on the findings, it was stated that gender imbalance could have devastating effects on the productive capacity of the civil servants and the services they render. It was recommended that government should support efforts of eradicating causes of gender imbalance in the civil service to improve productivity and service delivery; school counsellors should initiate and organize seminars, symposia and public enlightenment on addressing the rates of gender imbalance in the ministries, departments and agencies of the public service through close synergy with State Counselling Associations and the Offices of the Head of Civil Service. Similarly, all stakeholders should join hands in the crusade to eradicate gender imbalance on the civil service. Their individual and collective efforts could lead to high productivity in service delivery when the measures are doggedly accepted, planned and executed.

Keywords: Civil service; gender imbalance; and productivity.

INTRODUCTION
Gender imbalance in society is a stigma that has generated a lot of interest and literature for social psychologists and counselors (Kowalski 2018; Kurang, 2015). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Article 5 on Gender Equality states, “Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful and sustainable world”. The magnitude to which this occurs varies from country to country and cuts across the social strata (Eke, 2011). According to Kitch, (2012), “Throughout history, women have faced intense discrimination from lack of legal rights and very little independence from their husbands to being thought to have inferior brains”. While people are born either male or female, they acquire some traits including how they interact with the opposite sex within households, communities, schools and workplaces. When individuals fail to adapt to the required
norms set by the society or group, they face stigmatisation, discrimination and social exclusion, which attracts imbalance (Lawrie, 2015). According to Fapohunda (2011), gender imbalance is attributable to sex roles, stereotyping and demands on attitudes of males and females to many issues in life. It also refers to deferential treatments meted to males and females in places of work (Husu, 2000). Gender imbalance therefore, poses a major challenge to development, by lowering individual well-being and hampering social justice in societies (Long, 2017). Gender imbalance is a major impediment to the amelioration of full human potentials in Africa, where gender social stratifications have resulted in imbalances in form of benefits among social groups of men and women (Schlein, 2016).

According to (Husu, 2000), gender imbalance is a type of disequilibrium that is based on gender of the individual. Usually women are treated differently and unequally to men, especially in their careers and economic pursuits, which result in naivety associated with low esteem and loss of confidence in societal astute. This could lead to desperation and spell doom for humanity.

**Determinants of Gender Imbalance**

The main determinants of gender imbalance are culture, religion, economic setup, social setup, moral standards and education level of society, which combine to shape gender imbalance in any society or region of the world. The central agony in the imbalance is the orchestration or upliftment of men over women in the society, which glorifies one as superior and another as inferior (Nisha & Ravi, 2010). The importance for one group is decided in accordance with its physical strength instead of mental capabilities.

**Types of Gender Imbalance**

Gender imbalance is a practice in human society that persistently fails to be wiped out, despite efforts by world leaders and women-right groups (Mccune, 2014). Due to its complicity, this study will touch a few of the contentious areas:

i. Special opportunity imbalance- The availability of education everywhere is not always in favour of women, especially at the higher education level where fewer young women than men have access. This is the case even in developed countries. This type of imbalance has been based on the superficial misconception that men and women are born different;

ii. Imbalance in Employment/Professional Imbalance- This is more pronounced in employment, promotion and vertical mobility in places of work where men outnumber women (Fajonyomi, Ogungbade, Bolu-Steve & Isarinade, 2017). As women take jobs requiring low physical and mental abilities, they are paid lower than men who engage in high skilled jobs.

iii. Ownership Imbalance- In many cultures, women are not supposed to own properties or inherit them from their late husbands. This implies that women have very little to offer in terms of commercial or economic spheres of their countries’ Gross Domestic Product (GDP);

iv. Women Spend More Man-Hours-Women work at home and in the offices to fulfill their matrimonial and economic contributions to family needs, while men only enjoy from their fruits.

Thus, women are more valued in home, while men engage in market-based economies as well as being the bread-earners.

The African Union (AU) Gender Policy (2007) has developed a Gender Policy that focuses on closing the equality gap between men and women in general and particularly, addressing gender imbalance, which have resulted in women’s dispowerments and the feminization of poverty. This has to increase the awareness of the crucial roles women play, especially in conflict, conflict situations and in peace, reconstruction and reconciliation.

Gender is thus, the ascription of people into males and females to connote boys and girls and later men and women. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002), described gender as “those characteristics of women and men, which are socially constructed and who make up gender identity and determines gender roles”. These attributes distinguish them in their modes of behaviour, attitudes and emotions (Borgatta & Montrogomery, 2000). (Wood, 2005) opines that gender imbalance is the idea and situation that men and women are not equal.
Obasoro and Dada (2017) Wangiru (2011) found that gender roles, teachers’ self-perception, socialization and gender stereotype, caused gender imbalance in education administration among teachers. In Nigeria recognition is accorded the importance of women in development and there is commitment to their increased participation in the country’s economic growth (Obasoro & Dada, 2017). The policy of providing educational opportunities to all its citizenry has brought substantial gains to women.

**Gender Imbalance in the Military**

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1325) which was adopted in 2000 paved way for a gender balance on conflict resolution. The resolution still remains in the conduit pipe, awaiting full implementation though, as at 2015, female military personnel account for only 3.2 per cent in UN peacekeeping missions. There are several reasons adduced for this phenomenon especially, in military organisations. The traditional domination of men, the physical demands of the career are some of them. Military masculinity has become influential in explaining why gender imbalance exists in the military. Goldstein (2001) explains that gender in the military is not just about highlighting attention to men but to women too. Male gender domination in the military has been encouraged to inspire men to carry out the military function of engaging in combats because it energises its members to be prepared to risk their lives for the greater good of their nation. This onerous task of putting one’s live on the line is the dividing line that primarily sets the military career apart from civilian careers. The risk signature of the military career, thus has to justify and promote such risk taking ventures in order to set its mission/vision to attract new entrants. Kronsell (2012), thus associates military masculinity with aggression, violence and strength, which invariably, creates a warrior syndrome of masculinity based on the primary military task of armed combat. Segal and Segal (1983) have examined the gender balance within core functions and support functions and found more female personnel in administration and medical specialties than traditional military functions.

**Gender Imbalance in Nigerian Politics**

The role of women in politics has generated a lot of comments in the international arena, with the Department of International Development (DFID, 2011) enumerating the position filled by women in legislative houses of some African countries. For instance, South Africa’s two houses have 33.2 and 42 per cent in the upper and lower chambers respectively, while Rwanda has 58 and Senegal has 43. The figure in Nigeria is not encouraging as at 2018: 7.3 per cent in the Senate and 4.0 per cent, respectively in the House of Representatives. The scenario is not different in the thirty-six (36) States where the governorship elections only produced four (4) women deputy governors. Currently, only five (5) women are in the Federal Executive Council as ministers out of Thirty-six, representing 14 per cent. Reasons adduced for the lopsidedness are many: while some view it as a result of cultural stereotyping and traditional practices, others view it as a result of patriarchal practices in societies; still others align it to absence of legislation that should give women certain quotas in elective and appointed positions (Osuizigbo, 2016).

During the pre-colonial era, women leaders abound in Nigeria. Mention would be made of Madam Tinubu of Lagos, Mrs Margaret Ekpo of the historical Aba riots of 1929, Hajiya Gambo Sawaba of Northern Element Progressive Union (N.E.P.U.), Queen Amina of Zazzau (Zaria), Iyalode Efunsetan Aniwure of Ibadan, Princess Moremi of Ife and Princess Inikpi of Igala. Political gender discrimination in Nigeria context therefore, had its roots from colonial era when the 1922 Sir Hugh Clifford Constitution disenfranchised women in the skin of things by allotting cognizance to males (Erunke 2009).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is therefore, to examine impacts of gender imbalance on civil service productivity in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

i. What are the causes of gender imbalance on civil service productivity?

ii. Are there significant differences in the rate of gender imbalance on the civil Service productivity?

iii. What are the consequences of gender imbalance on the civil service productivity?
Research Hypotheses
Following the reviewed literature and the research questions raised, the following research hypotheses were generated:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the respondents on the causes of gender imbalance in civil service productivity;
H₀₂: There is no significant difference between respondents on the rate of gender imbalance on civil service productivity; and
H₀₃: There no significant difference between respondents as to the consequences of gender imbalance on civil service productivity.

METHODOLOGY
The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. The target population of this study consisted of all civil servants in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Three hundred (300) respondents were drawn from the population to form the sample size. Multistage sampling technique was employed by using stratified sampling techniques to categorise the civil servants by salary Grade Levels (G.L.)—these are: G.L.01 to G.L.16. Out of the G.L.s, simple random sampling technique was adopted in drawing three seniority groups: which are Junior (G.L. 01 to G.L.06), Senior (G.L. 07 to G.L. 13) and Management (G.L.14 to G.L. 16). One hundred (100) respondents were randomly selected from each group making a total of three hundred (300) respondents for this study.

The instrument for this study was a 30-item modified Likert scale questionnaire with a 4-category response options of strongly agree to strongly disagree. The researchers developed the questionnaire tagged Gender Imbalance in Civil Service Productivity (GICSP). The instrument had two sections: Section A had ten items on the respondents’ bio-data, while Section B with 20 items was to elicit information on the variables of the study. The instrument was face-validated by a lecturer in Guidance and Counselling Unit, Faculty of Education, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria and an expert in Science, Technology and Mathematics Education Department, Faculty of Education, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria.

The instrument was trial tested using 60 civil servants in Nasarawa State that were not part of the sample size. The data collected were analysed using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient, which yielded .82. The coefficient indicated high internal consistency and proved that the instrument was reliable to be used for the study.

RESULTS
Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the respondents on the causes of gender imbalance on civil service productivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (X)</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Cal. t</th>
<th>Crit. t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicated that there was significant difference between the respondents on the causes of gender imbalance on civil service productivity at .05 level of significance because the calculated t-value of 2.57 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.97. With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis upheld.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between respondents on the rate of gender imbalance on civil service productivity.
Table 2: t-test of Rate of Gender Imbalance on Civil Service Productivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean(X)</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Cal. t</th>
<th>Crit. t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 showed that the calculated t-value of 2.71 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.97 at .05 level of significance. With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate is upheld.

Hypothesis 3: There no significant difference between respondents as to the consequences of gender imbalance on civil service productivity.

Table 3: t-test Analysis on the Consequences of Gender Imbalance on Civil Service Productivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean(X)</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Cal. t</th>
<th>Crit. t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>89.31</td>
<td>8.73</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>89.43</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 showed that the calculated t-value of .1 is less than the critical t-value of 1.97 at .05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is upheld and the alternate hypothesis is rejected. This is an indication that the respondents were not significant in their responses.

DISCUSSION

The finding of this study regarding the first hypothesis that there is no significant difference between respondents on the rate of gender imbalance on civil service productivity was rejected indicating that there was significant difference of responses to gender imbalance on the civil service productivity. This finding may be as a result of the fact that gender stereotyping is prevalent in all spheres of Nigerian society, the civil service, inclusive (Jet, 2012). Another reason for the varied responses might be gender inferiority complex existing in the civil service, where males dominate majority of positions leaving a handful for females (Marl, 2010).

The second hypothesis that there is no significant difference between respondents on the rate of gender imbalance on civil service productivity, showed that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate is upheld, thus revealing significant difference of respondents to the rate of gender imbalance on the civil service productivity. This might lay credence to the societal notion that the place of women is in the kitchen and not civil service where they should be seen and not heard. This is in consonance with the views of (Edgecliffe-Johnson, 2015) who postulated that the level of females’ educational attainment greatly determines their placement in the civil service.

The third hypothesis that there no significant difference between respondents as to the consequences of gender imbalance on civil service productivity, revealed insignificant difference of respondents. This is not farfetched as the respondents continue to exhibit themselves when they want to progress on the job and would seek for avenues of furthering their horizon so as to add value to their positions.

Counselling Implications

The counselling implication of the finding of this study regarding the first hypothesis is that civil servants, irrespective of gender should be allowed to aspire for positions in the civil service. Counsellors should therefore, assume their civic roles of helping civil servants actualize their potentials and aspirations to positions in the civil service where self-actualisation and efficacy should be emphasized.

The second finding that there is no significant difference between respondents on the rate of gender imbalance on civil service productivity is a noticeable phenomenon where even the United Nations (UN, 2015) pressed on nations to improve their gender equality practices. The counselling implication is for women to come out of their cocoons and embrace education for excellence and progress so as to enable them compete favourably with their male counterparts in the civil service.

On the finding regarding consequences of gender imbalance on civil service productivity, the counsellor implication is that government should initiate programmes such as seminars and symposia that would enlighten and broaden the scope of knowledge of civil servants. Such initiatives should widen their scope and capacity development. Counsellors at the State level should assist government with specific
guidelines and the professional know how to achieving these goals. The counsellors could also undertake advocacy initiatives on awareness on consequences of mitigating gender imbalance in the civil service. Generally, gender imbalance should be fought head long and eradicated in the social fabrics of government ministries, departments and agencies so as to have equal gender representation and intervention for quality job delivery and productivity.

CONCLUSION
From evidence adduced, it is glaring that gender imbalance on civil service is a serious phenomenon that can endanger the smooth delivery of service machinery of any government. Sequel to the findings of this study therefore, it would not be out of proportion to assert that gender imbalance on the civil service is a cankerworm that has to be fought tooth-and-nail for better outcomes and job satisfaction. After all, without job satisfaction, there cannot be productivity. The findings had shown that out of the three hypotheses, two were rejected, while one was accepted. The roles of the counsellor in addressing the focus of the findings have been stated for emphasis.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Following the findings of this study, it is recommended that:
   i. government should explore and support efforts aimed at checking and eradicating causes of gender imbalance in the civil service so as to improve its productivity and service delivery;
   ii. counsellors in the services of government should initiate and organize seminars, symposia and public enlightenment on addressing the rates of gender imbalance in the ministries, departments and agencies of its public service. This could be achieved through close synergy with State Counselling Associations and the Offices of the Heads of Civil Service;
   iii. all stakeholders have to join hands in the crusade to eradicate gender imbalance on the civil service. Their individual and collective efforts could lead to fruition when doggedly accepted, planned and executed.

REFERENCES


