Predictors of Career Advancement of Female Academic Staff in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract: *Female participation in the formal sector is gradually growing in hitherto male and female oriented organizations around the globe. However, the rate of female entry into higher positions of management is not encouraging relative to the number of able female labour force in the Nigeria. Using regression analysis on 368 surveys of female academic staff of Nigerian universities via statistical package for social sciences 18, this study examines predictors and found that level of education and organizational support were positively significant to career advancement. However, work experience was negatively related to career advancement. Thus, this is an insight that these positive factors are viable predictors to career advancement of female academic staff. Recommendation for future study was given in the study.*

Keywords: key words, Career advancement, education, experience, organizational support, female academicians, Nigerian universities

Introduction

One of the global changes in terms of labour force around the universe is the obvious increase of females' participation in formal sectors, specifically in 2009 to 2014 in different nations and regions of the globe (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2015). Albeit, there is an upsurge in female involvement, but the participation is minimal and in dawdling speed, particularly in Nigeria. However, despite plentiful and varied human resource in of the country, For instance, there is about 177, 155,754 million people (51% males and 49%), and a female working age bracket of 53.6 percent (CIA World Factbook, 2015). But, the rate of female entry to higher position of management is not encouraging relative to the number of able female labour force in the country (ILO, 2015). It was further stressed by Olabisi (2014) and Duyilemi (2007) that even the Nigerian education institutions has not shown concern to the needs of making female academic staff to higher positions and this has led to a gender gap and male dominance in the country's higher institutions which persisted for long. Nonetheless, teaching is one of the compatable professions of female gender due to their nurturing, modest and compassion nature (Hofstede, 2011) and thus, the female folks will be better off in giving higher productivity in the higher institutions if given opportunity, particularly in the higher positions. Though, some females have achieved certain higher positions, but they are limited in number, and larger population of females' lecturers are restricted from getting to the top due to the "glass ceiling" syndrome (Ejumudo, 2013). Therefore, this study explore how this historic gap will be fill in making women to higher positions in the

Nigerian universities. To achieve this aims, self-efficacy and organization support theories were employed as the theoretical base of the study.

Self-efficacy influence individual goals and outcome expectations that lead to career advancement. Personal factors are the bedrocks of career advancement and serves as the vital machine through which individual articulated personal agency. Based on the assumption of self-efficacy theory of career advancement, self-efficacy is the individual perception about his/her ability and energies that is judicious for a course of action or obligatory to objectify designated kinds of performance. Accordingly, self-efficacy is not unitary, static or decontextualized traits rather it relates to dynamic of self-belief that are particular to certain performance spheres and their connections in a complex factor of persons' behaviour (Bandura, 1986). Although the effects of self-efficacy were derived from different factors, however, personal attainments are more professed to be the most powerful of self-efficacy and experience of person career success with given tasks or performance area perceives to increase self-efficacy (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2002). Thus, self-efficacy deals with personal capabilities of an employee that is related to outcome expectation (career advancement) or goal achievement (Lent et al., 2002).

In addition, Organization Support Theory (OST) argued the prominence of organizational support to career advancement. Scholars had noted that organization is a domicile that management of careers like planning and accomplishment of career-related actions are done (Bigliardi, Petroni & Ivo Dormio, 2005; Bozionelos, 2008). Thus, when examining career as a whole system, it is

pertinent that an organization is considered as factor of career system (Bigliardi, et al., 2005). In this vein, many organizations give alternative work schedules such as flexible period, job sharing, learning facilities, sabbaticals and childcare facilities, (Arokiasamy, Ismail, Ahmad & Othman, 2011). In this regards, Bozionelos (2008) opined that organizational factor is a significant element for career planning. Therefore, based on the aforementioned arguments, the following hypotheses were formulated to achieve the objectives of this study.

    i.   There is a positive and significant relationship between level of education and career advancement of female academic staff.

    ii.   There is a positive and significant relationship between working experience and career advancement of female academic staff.

    iii.   There is a positive and significant relationship between organizational support and career advancement of female academic staff.

METHOD

The population samples in this study comprised of 532 female academic staff in the Nigerian universities working in federal and states public universities. Closed ended questionnaire was adapted from previous studies (Arokiasamy et al., 2011; Tharenou, Latiner & Conrey 1994; Metz & Tharenou, 2001). Nevertheless, from the questionnaire administered on study samples, 377 questionnaires were retrieved and 368 were found usable in this study. That is 69.1% questionnaires

were retained and are sufficient for regression analysis, which this research employed (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). Similarly, the research used stratified random sampling in the selection of samples of the study so as to warrant an equal chance for both federal and states universities staff.

RESULTS

Measurement Model

As a requirement for parametric data analysis, this conducted measurement model analysis to obtain the reliability of the study instrument base on cronbach alpha and collinearity test. In this regards, the measures were statistically satisfactory because they obtained the cronbach's alpha that is greater than 0.70 threshold and collinearity statistics were as well sufficient. See table 1 and 2 below.

Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity is the erroneous estimation of regression coefficient that distort the statistical significance (Hair et al., 2006). It's increases the level of standard errors of the coefficient and non-significant coefficient (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Thus, multicollinearity was scrutinized in this study base on tolerance values and variance inflation factor (VIF) (Hair et al., 2006). Table 1, presents variance inflation factor (VIF), and Tolerance as were examined to know whether there is problem multicollinearity. Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2011) suggested that multicollinearity is a problem at a VIF value of 5 and above, while tolerance value is a problem when is less than .20. Table 1 show the VIF and tolerance values of the study exogenous latent variables.

Table   1
Collinearity Statistics

Constructs	Tolerance	VIF
Level of Education	.977	1.023
Working Experience	.977	1.023
Organizational Support	.999	1.001

Table 1 shows that multicollinearity is not a problem among the independent constructs because VIF values were less than 5 and tolerance values were more than .20, therefore they are within recommendation (Hair et al., 2011). Therefore, the model is suitable for structural analysis as is free from multicollinearity problem. Therefore, reliability can be subsequently examined as multicollinearity is not a problem.

Table   2
Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Test

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level of Education	2.2255	.60937
Working Experience	3.5272	3.07656
Organizational Support	3.9226	.86509
Career Advancement	3.9717	.88374
Cronbach's Alpha	0.739	
N.of Items	15	

The table 2 shows the results of mean and standard deviation of the independent and dependent variables. Career advancement had the highest mean and level of education was the lowest. Similarly, working experience had the highest standard deviation and level of level of education was the lowest. This means career advancement was the most priories construct of attention (Hair et al., 2006).

Demographic Profile

Demographic profile was reported in Table 3 in order to give a clear picture of the study respondents' composition.

Table 3
Demographic Profile

Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Marital status	Single	65	17.7
	Married	268	72.8
	Divorce	15	4.1
	Widow	20	5.4
Qualification	Bachelor Degree	36	9.8
	Master	213	57.9
	PhD	119	32.3
University status	Federal University	180	48.9
	State University	188	51.1

Table 3 above shows that 103 of the respondents were males and 265 were female academic staff. Furthermore, 268 are married respondents were highest, followed by 65 singles, 15 divorces and 20 widows. In addition, there were 36 female academic staff with Bachelor degrees, 213 with master degree and those with 119 with PhDs. Lastly, there were 180 of academic staff came from both federal and 188 staff from state universities.

Regression Analysis

Based on sufficient condition of the measurement model presented above, this study further conducted structural model through regression analysis.

Table 4
Model Summary and Coefficients

Constructs	Beta	t	Sig.	Decision
(Constant)		11.891	.000	
Level of Education	.165	3.292	.001	Supported
Working Experience	-.252	-5.018	.000	Not supported
Organizational Support	.156	3.137	.002	Supported
F	13.790			
P	.000			
R^2	.102			
df	3(364)			

The table 4 shows the results of multiple linear regressions between independent and dependent constructs. The model is revealed a statistically significant result at (F = 13.790; P = 0.000) and explains the variance of (R^2 = 0.102 of career advancement of the female academic staff. Furthermore, the table shows that "level of education", "organizational support" as statistically positive and significant to career advancement at (level of education β=.165; t=3.292; p=.001 and organizational support β=.156; t=3.137; p=.002. But, working experience negatively significant at β= -.252; t= -5.018; p=.000). Therefore, the data supported the assertion that level of education and organizational support were predictors of determining career advancement, however, working experience was not supported.

DISCUSSION

Level of Education and Career Advancement

Based on the data of this study, level of education is a potential predictor of career. Accordingly, Tliass and Kauser (2011) examine the effect of work-related elements on career advancement and found that level of education had a positive impacts

on career advancement. They further argued that, the managerial positions progression for women workers required them to be more educated than their male counterpart. Similarly, educational qualification after graduation is positive and significant on career advancement (Garavan, O'Brien & O'Hanlon, 2006). In another development, level of education was reported as a predictor of promotion to higher hierarchy (Tharenou, et al., 1994; Anugwom, 2009; Yusuff, 2014). This position of study findings and within the discourse community of career advancement, the human capital theory maintained the assertion that staffs who invested in their education and experience among others, to depict higher performance on their work and subsequently they receive rewards for their effort in form of (career advancement) salary increase or horizontal promotion (Ballout, 2007). However, a survey research conducted in Malaysia to study the predictors of career advancement of academic staff in private universities established that educational qualification was insignificant to career advancement (Arokiasamy et al., 2011). In this same view, Metz and Tharenou (2001) argued that educational qualification attainment has insignificant impact career advancement at higher managerial position, however, found significant to career advancement at lower and middle level of managerial position.

Work Experience and Career Advancement

The statistical regression conducted from data of this study showed that working experience was negative and significant to career advancement. However, Tlaiss and Kauser (2011) establish that work experience positively related to career advancement on the middle manager in Lebanon banking sector but not topmost management cadre. In this regards Garavan, O'Brien and O'Hanlon (2006), Tliass and Kauser (2011) and Ballout (2007) stressed that working experience is positive and related to rewards in terms of salary and promotion. Abramo, D'Angelo and Rosati (2015) also obtained that working experience is positively linked to career advancement profeesors in in Italian university. Similarly, Nurses working in Iraian teaching hospital agreed that working experience was predictor to career adavancement (Sheikhi, Khoshknab, Mohammadi & Oskouie, 2016).

Nevertheless, Arokiasamy et al (2011) study on female academic staff in Malaysian private universities revealed that working experience (years) was insignificant to career advancement. In addition, Metz and Tharenou (2001) found that working experience was a predictor to managerial career advancement at lower and middle level management advancement but not at the higher level. They supported their assertion with the theory of human capital and the theory of social capital that working experience permit entry and promotion at lower and middle managerial positions. However, moving to higher level needs social capital theory such networking, networking among others (Arokiasamy et al., 2011; Metz & Tharenou, 2001).

Organizational Support and Career Advancement

According to the data collected for this study, organizational support was positive predictor to career advancement of female academic staff in Nigerian universities. Hence, this result is consonant to findings of the discourse community. For instance, Tansky and Cohen (2001) found that organizational support was positive and significant to staffs' career development. This study means that staffs' who perceived career advancement have the feeling of lack of organizational support (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009) Thus, dearth of perceived organizational support distress positive reciprocity effects and negative intention (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009). This finding is not surprising because Chen (2010) ascertained that perceived organizational support is positive and significant to career success. This is due to the fact that organizational support improves worker career satisfaction, and management of career (Barnett & Bradley, 2007).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study establishes that level of education and organizational support were predictors to the career advancement of female academic staff in the Nigerian universities. This means that personal and organizational factors interrelate to predict career advancement. However, the study found work experience to be negatively significant to career advancement. This negativity can be explained that most of the respondents' of the study were those that received advancement (upgrade) from graduate assistants to assistant lecturers as can be seen from their demographic profile. Thus, this horizontal promotion of academic staff in the Nigerian universities does not require any years of experience rather an additional (master) degree. Thus, the implication of this finding to the field of public administration is that employees and organization can utilize these findings in planning and managing their career advancement. Hence, this research is an insight into our understanding of personal and supportive factors that influence career advancement. Lastly, this study achieves and proves the integration of personal and organizational factors on career advancement.

Recommendations for future study

The study used on cross-sectional method in which the data were collected at one period of time. Further study may employ longitudinal studies. It is may be essential as well to re-examine the effect of work experience in another study or a moderator so as to examine varied outcomes from previous

studies. Also, in-depth interview may be conducted to pool subjective explanations on predictors of career advancement of female academic staff. Lastly, a broader model may be tested with more predictors in order to see the effect of additional the variables, because the explanatory power of this study model is medium. Hence, utilizing other variables may warrant chances of higher explanatory power of a model.

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