WOMEN AND MANAGEMENT POSITIONS IN CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC

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Abstract
This study focused on women in management positions in corporate organizations, with reference to Guaranty Trust Bank Plc. The research design adopted survey descriptive method, using verbal analysis. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select fifteen staff and members of Guaranty Trust Bank Plc at the headquarters. The data collected was analyzed using the qualitative descriptive approach. Data gathered were presented as such. Results obtained revealed that the extent of women participation in management positions in corporate organizations was very low, while factors influencing gender discrimination against women participation in management position in corporate organizations were enormous and still persist. Also, gender discrimination against women generally was mainly attributed to the patriarchal culture, influencing the status of women in decision making. In the same vein, strategies and policies that can eradicate gender discrimination and glass ceiling in corporate organizations were consequently proffered. The study therefore recommended that the Nigerian government needs to find lasting solutions to the problem of glass ceiling or discrimination, especially in the private sector organizations which sheltered the banking sector. This is possible through relevant laws and policies, compelling employers of labour on certain issues on how to balance gender segregation in work place, in both the private and public sectors of the economy.

Key Words: Gender, Decision Making, Glass Ceiling, Discrimination.

Introduction
The issues revolving around women in management positions within the corporate organizations remain a continuing topic of discussion and debate in Nigeria and other developing economies and this should have been a case of the past by now as extant literature review affirm that women’s educational and professional life and their status believed to have suffered, and has been on the increase due to efficient and dedicated role played by them in different organizations (Ali, Khan & Munaf, 2013, Fapohunda, 2011, Price, 2008, Kamson, 2007). Traditionally, this involved a clearly marked out fact that where men were the principal wage-earner and provider, the women complemented their home from a purely domestic setting, taking care of the home, children and domestic chores (Kamson, 2007). Also, extant literature buttress that becoming a manager in a topnotch organizations should no longer be perceived as a phenomenon that only few women can attain (Fapohunda, 2011). This must be an open phenomenon once such women meet the prerequisite it require to attain management positions.
Managerial positions must not be restricted to any of the gender, it must be open to all and sundry to attain and the only determining factor(s) could be traced towards defined prerequisites that are in line with organizational core objectives without any form of bias or prejudice. This is the reason, why Ali, Khan and Munaf (2013) stress that “women’s educational and professional life and their status in society are at present more on increase due to the fact that efficient and dedicated role played by them in different organizations”. The authors exemplified that from junior workers through managerial position which is not limited to educational management, should not only handle particular department but also as political leaders, they can represent their local regions or the entire country. In essence, women should not be discriminated against and must be given equal opportunities as their male counterparts. The contributions of women should not be seen as just complimentary but also same strategies or opportunities used by men to achieving the goals of an organization should be given to women in all ramifications and this would give them the chance to prove themselves, hence changing the notion of being just home keepers (Fapohnda, 2011).

Women’s contribution in today’s age cannot be over-emphasized. It is in fact, believed that some women have now become more powerful, knowledgeable and of course, function intelligently in crises situations and in the world of management in particular (Ali, et al, 2013, Peretomode & Peretomode, 2005). One notable fact is the rapid increase of women in education (via various seminars, workshop and women empowerment programmes amongst others), as they believe; it is the only means of gender balancing especially in relation to the world of work in general and women in management positions in particular (Fashoyin, 2000). This shows that women in work organizations can take on the challenges of the practical life and do not restrict them to the domestic responsibilities only. Although, the habitual home by description was not restricted to responsibilities within the house in which the family subsisted, it drawn-out also to all domains of family activities including farming and its relative disposal of farm produce or products, taking care of children and education of children and other things which keep the family/ home going.

This therefore means that the basic home duties and a dependent relationship of a woman on her husband was a traditional expectation of women in this part of world. Buttressing this fact reveal through extant literature that women’s first role was traditionally the management of the supply of food available and its relative preparation and this responsibility can hardly be appreciated from an unfamiliar imbibed cultural perception (Kamsom, 2007). In contemporary Nigeria and most patriarchic culture, female gender is generally regarded as the inferior and not relevant in management position or where decisions are made.

Generally, women are often denied to gain access to both honoured and utilitarian roles and are only open to men (Hora, 2014). In fact, women who seek management positions are often antagonized with barriers that block their progress (Kanter, 1977). Consequently, despite the rate at which women are engaged in education, there are still very few in top management positions even in the developed economy. The case is the same in some of the developed economies. Young and Bang (2013) affirm this fact with clear-cut example, “for at least a quarter of a century, women have been entering the managerial ranks of the United States organizations at about the same rate as their male counterparts but they still remain underrepresented at top levels. This perhaps, is due to organizational level factors such as expecting women to perform higher standards and also tasked with greater responsibilities than their male counterparts with associated that leads to failure (Ryan & Haslam, 2007; Heilman, 2006; Powell & Graves, 2003). Arguably, women are at the mercy of men once they are employed particularly, in terms of opportunities for interacting and mentoring. This is very common in the developing economies like Nigeria and Ghana (Omotayo, 2011).

Based on the facts in the preceding paragraphs above, it is germane to seek to answer such questions as to what extent are women deprived of attaining management positions in corporate organizations and the banking sector in particular, what are the challenges faced by women in the course of career ascension to managerial position, what kind of management styles common with women and what measures are being taken to promote more women representation in management positions in Nigeria? It is on this basis that this paper sought to investigate women in management positions within the corporate organizations in Nigeria with reference to Guaranty Trust Bank Plc, with a view of bridging the gap created.

This paper seeks to address the following research questions: (i) to what extent do women participate in management positions in corporate organizations?; (ii) to what extent are gender discriminations influenced against women participation in management position in corporate organizations?; (iii) would patriarchal culture influence the status of women in relation to decision making in corporate organizations? and (iv) what are the strategies and policies that can be used to eradicate gender discrimination and glass ceiling in corporate organizations?
Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The existing literature on the state of female gender in organizations in Nigeria is rather limited and sketchy. Such literature has shown that there are differences against women in most organizations especially as regards the level of responsibilities and the autonomy given to women. The fact that most employers prefer to engage men rather than women especially in jobs which require average intelligence and technical in nature and in most cases even where female gender are engaged in place of men, the level of collaboration given by their colleagues is low, and they are never given the respect they merit (Akanji, 2008). This is evident where most manufacturing or textile companies engage more men than their female counterparts (Peretomode & Peretomode, 2005). In fact, the banking and insurance sectors who engage women in the developing countries does that for the purpose of marketing and making more sales for the companies (Fapohunda, 2011; Omotayo, 2011). The authors’ perceptions reveal that women engagement in such sectors sells more than their male counterparts.

Habitually, female gender has inclined to be home makers and mothers even while they are engaged in paid employment and their work was not expected to take them away from their domestic chores (Fashoyin, 2000; Adedokun, 1998). Specifically, their work was largely to take care of the home; the children and husbands.

Female are in general conditioned by societal and cultural pressures to adopt certain ideal behaviour patterns perpetual with the society’s expectations of how they must behave (Doyin-Hassan, 2004). It is believed in the Nigerian cultural society that men are the ones who should have the dominant and aggressive qualities while the woman must demonstrate passive and needy qualities (Adedokun, 1998). This belief had so infused the society so much that, any woman that displayed the set roles for men was regarded as a different and all ill-brought up being (Matanmi, 2007; Fashoyin, 2000).

The term “glass ceiling” was first introduced in the year 1986 in journal article tagged “Wall Street Journal” authored by Hymowitz and Scellhardt and this concept of glass ceiling has since developed appreciable huge body of researching affirming the existence of impairment preventing women participation in management positions (Kochanowski, 2010, Eisner and Harvey, 2009). In a nutshell, the term “glass ceiling” is described as the imperceptible barriers or barricades that women confront as they approached the corporate hierarchy in corporate organizations and public sector organizations, (Metcalfe, 1994). This description developed from anecdotal evidence which was later validated by a federally mandated study entitled “Good for business” (Kochanowski, 2010). The primary aim of which is to demonstrate that women are trying to progress within a context that is very antagonistic.

Li and Leung (2001) affirm that Glass Ceiling is also called Glass Wall is a transparent wall that affect women as a group who are prevented from attaining to management positions simply of that they are women. In the same vein, another writer used the term Glass Ceiling to sum up the frustrations of women at every level who could see where they wanted to go but barricaded by an unbeatable barrier (Flanders, 1994).

Notably, the actuality of “glass ceiling” could be explained by three inseparable factors, work and family conflict, network access and family support (Li & Leung, 2001). “Glass ceiling” in relations to work and family conflict, network access and family support describe the barrier of qualified individuals in the work place. This is evident as most women who find themselves are not ready to balance in between their work and family life while some, who are ready to balance work and family, are being denied access to managerial positions. Again, some women are not given supports, either from their husbands or family due purposely to her gender or patriarchal nature in the developing countries. However, this glass ceiling perhaps account for reasons why most female gender that appear to have the same qualification as their male counterpart, Kochanowski, (2010) stress that same number of years and experiences can never be perceived as the same. This is as a result of the politics being played in the developing economies, solely, perhaps that women are seen as inferior in all ramifications and, or for reason as that most African countries sees home duties/ keeping as being the work of ascribed to women amongst other factors.

In summary, when discussing about women in paid employment or those aspiring top management position and those seeking general management positions, the term glass ceiling comes to mind. It refers to a barrier which female gender face in the world of work. The term comes across in corporate organizations, especially at the top of the hierarchy which prevents female gender from attaining managerial positions. Tanhaua (2012) affirmed that female gender has opportunity to rise through the top management positions but they often face difficulties on the ladder way up, rather than getting ahead straight-forward as their male counterparts often experience.

The right of female gender to engage in labour force and to get the same pay as their colleague men and also be managers still remain unresolved problems and glass ceiling. This issue needs to be keenly looked at and find means of resolving of balancing the anomaly and must be the concern of individuals at work irrespective of the gender, the
organizations and government and its agencies. In essence, women participation in managerial positions must be an issue of all individuals, organizations and government.

The Concept of Management

The term management has been described by various authors and scholars and all descriptions and definitions go toward one point – a consciously co-ordinated efforts of two or more individuals by a manager to achieving set objectives of an organization. Very close to this description (management) is a definition provided by Griffin (2000). Griffin describe a manager as an individual that make decisions, plans, organizes, supervises and also controls staff members, finance and information resources. This definition, apart from explaining the statement earlier described in the preceding sentence above, it also highlights some of the functions of a manager. Griffin (2000) came out with seven distinctive functions of a manager, ranging from planning through information resources as enumerated. Quoting the business encyclopedia (1995), Katarzyna (2007) describe manager as a n individual who fulfills the managerial functions, such as planning, organizing, motivating and controlling which also exercises power over staff members and their activities for enhanced organizational set targets.

The term “management” is therefore the process of “controlling, coordinating and developing economic activities, encompassing operational which is internal and external (that is, strategic) domains” (Hampson& Morgan, 2001). The focal point of this definition boils down to the common slogan of the concept of management, that is, “management is the art of getting things done through and with people in formally organized groups (McKenna, 2001). The general impression of existing literatures on manager/ management involves planning, organizing, leading and controlling resources in order to facilitate the set objectives of organization through the efficient and effective use of staff members.

As seen in McKenna’s description above, one of the functions of a manager require “leading” as part of achievement of organizational goals. This, no doubts, shows that manager’s functions require covering leadership role. This is why Algahtani (2014) affirm that management and leadership do share many similar duties which comprise of working with individuals and influencing others to achieve the set targets of an organization. The author emphasize that management skills are used to plan, build, and direct organizational systems to accomplish missions and goals, while leadership skills are used to focus on a potential missions and goals, while leadership skills are used to concentrate on a possible change by creating direction, supporting individuals, motivating and inspirational. Algahtani (2014) conclude that all managers are leaders. The author also affirm that the notion might not be correct since some of the managers do not exercise leadership skills, that some individuals lead without having any managerial positions. Algahtani, (2014) and Bass (2010) submit that there is a continuing argument about on the difference between managers and leaders. Bass (2010) claim that managers and leaders’ activities overlap each other which also bring disagreement. Supportably Bass (2010) and Yukl, (1989)’s point of disagreement in management and leadership overlap syndrome that a good manager cannot be a good leader and vice-versa. In summary, management and leadership should be perceived differently to comprise an exclusive set of functions or activities for enhanced organizational goals.

The paper is steered by the feminist theory. The theory recognizes the universal effect of gender disunions on social life of individuals and attempts to understand women’s subjugation and the structures in society that champion this oppression and subordination in the work place and society in general. The feminist standpoint, considering many parallels between the genders, remark that female and male genders have equal potentials for individual development. As Nzomo (1995) puts it, dissimilarities in understanding the potential, therefore, must result from externally imposed restraints and from the sway of social institutions and values.

There are three broad viewpoints of feminist theory (that is, personal factors, institutional factors and cultural factors) in explaining the non-participation of women in management positions in corporate organizations. The first viewpoint is tagged as “personal factors” in which the paucity of women in management positions is ascribed to the psychosocial attributes, including personality characteristics, attitudes and behavioral skills of women themselves. Among the personal factors are self-respect and self-assurance, lack of motivation and ambition to accept challenges “to move up the ladder”, less emotional stability, lack of ability to handle a crisis (Bond, 1996) and women’s low latent for managerial role, and not as much of having or no confidence. On the other hand, “personal factors such as, perseverance, confidence, inventive, loyalty, creativeness, and trustworthiness aid female gender to ascend to top management positions” (Singh and Shahabudin 2000).

The second is the “institutional factors” archetype which posits that it is the disadvantageous position of women in the organizational structure to remain in an organization in low numbers and possess little or no power and they are
restricted not to have access to available resources which shapes and delineates the behaviour and positions of women. The fundamental principle of this viewpoint is that male and female genders are equally capable of and committed to assuming positions of management. The problem is devolved in the existing structure and how to resolve is through a strategic means with a fundamental change to reject wrong discrimination in institutional policies and practices. The institutional or structural factors that influence women negatively include “discriminatory appointment and promotion practices; male resistance to women in management positions; absence of policies and legislations to ensure participation of women; and restricted opportunities for management training and for demonstrating competence as a result of power structure in the world of work” (Bond, 1996). This, of course influences positive participation of women in management positions. The positive contribution or enhancement towards women participation in management positions include proper mentoring re-engineering and guidance, human capacity and resource development, especially for women, meaningful promotion and access to information and communication technology with supple work conditions and schedules.

The last viewpoint is the one described by Smulders (1998). Smulders discovers that “cultural factors” which binds gender and organizational structure factors. The view of the analysis is focused with the social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities and expectations to female and male gender. According to Smulders, “the gender-based roles are carried into work place and kept in place because the actors involved, both dominant and subordinate, contribute to social and organizational reality”. Therefore, the cultural factors lead to stereotypical interpretations about the abilities of a female gender within the cultural context. The opinion that management positions are only suitable for men again demotes women to subordinate roles. This is evident as extant literatures in the preceding reviews place emphasis on women assuming the role of mothers, care-givers and home-makers. These viewpoints of personal factors, institutional factors and cultural factors, no doubts are related to the study and this is part of the issue that motivated the paper.

Women Participation in Management Positions in Corporate Organizations

Although, women nowadays take up managerial roles than ever before but Hoobler, Lemmon and Wayne (2011) writes that women’s participation in management positions in corporate organizations is still foreign to many and problematic. This scholars adduced reasons that lack of women in management positions may designate to low-level women that attaining management position is shaky. This is no other reasons than lack of exposure or mentorship from the few women who are already in management positions as a succession strategy, and of course, low level of education and this automatically debar them from attaining such managerial positions. To certain degree, this is why some corporations lose the right persons and could lead to low productivity in organizations.

Grant Thorn International Business Reports (2012) submits that we find one, out of every two persons as female gender and extant literatures have it that women hold barely more than one in every five top management roles. The Report affirms the bearing and raising children is usually seen as the barrier hence, imbalance in the boardroom for example can be disadvantageous to growth prospect or corporate organizations.

Kochanowski, (2010) states that there is scarcity of women in management or top management positions in the world of work. He emphasized that despite the report on progress of women in the work organizations in the United States which also hold about forty (40%) per cent positions in management; it still lacks many of them in executive positions and on corporate boards of directors (Kochanowski, 2010, Eagly& Carly, 2007). Adler (2001) suggests that women in executive and board of directors would add value to corporations and make difference. Generally, the gender difference in management positions therefore have been a topic of debate as it has been demonstrated that problems of gender discrimination influence participation of women in management positions.

Factors Influencing Gender Discrimination against Women Participation in Management Positions

Onsongo (2004) writes that women’s participation in management perhaps be heightened via a ploy as mentoring, so that women can believe in themselves, and also build confidence in selling their potentials which eventually will make them feel recognized and appreciated. Specifically, as put together by Onsongo (2004) the position attained by women in management positions is subjected to a number of factors. One of such factors is the survival of a pool of formally qualified women, the socio-cultural and psychological barriers preventing women from attaining managerial or top positions, and the attitudes within the corporate organizations. Kamau (2001) assert that “lack of policy and practice that encourage women to aspire for management positions is the key deterrent for the women in organizations. Kamau (2001) also uncovered that women were subjected to pressures and experiences not met by men. These pressures include strain, depression, isolation, stereotype and the whole experience of pressure from institutional and societal cultures that are not supportive of women. Kamau’s submission is therefore seen as very
key in recognizing some of the factors that influence gender discrimination against women participation in management position. The point emerges from the literature is however the issues impacting women’s participation into leadership or managerial positions to determining where there might be progress and where such discrimination persists.

Stereotyping and prejudices which emerge from women’s competing roles on their progress toward parity with men in managerial roles or influential positions serve as impediment and factors influencing gender discrimination against women participation in management positions. These are beliefs regarding the trait and behavioural features attributed to individuals on the basis of gender (Dovidio & Helb, 2005). It is general phenomenon that female gender are typically stereotyped as more communal which is concerned with the welfare of the people including attributes like kind, sentiment, generous and compassionate and their male counterparts which describe them with features as more aggressive, confident and dominant involving being too ambitious, self-confident and independent with leadership roles (Eagly and Karuna, 2002). No wonder, why Schein (2007) stress that factors influencing gender discrimination against women participation in management positions exist globally and the higher the organizational level, the more glaring gender gap. It therefore clear that the most obstacle for women in management in all corporate organizations of the world still the persistent stereotype that the top positions are being attributed to male gender.

Similarly, Lodiaga and Mbevi (1995) stress that there are numerous causes for under-representation of women in management positions of authority and responsibility with singular deep-rooted traditional or cultural and attitudinal perceptions that influence both the employers’ and employees’ attitude, including women’s self-concept to be dominated in the developing economies, particularly in Nigeria. These traditional or cultural and attitudinal perceptions promoted the notion of women’s inappropriateness for management positions of power and responsibility. As a result of these attitudinal beliefs, “there were significant gender-based differences and of conflicts both in family and work places (Lodiaga and Mbevi, 1995). The authors conclude that to take up a career and be successful involves serious amount of organization, re-engineering and planning in which the male gender rarely have much part.

In the words of Nzomo (1995), the socio-cultural beliefs and myths about the role of women in society are also the key factors for women’s failure to attain top management positions in work organizations irrespective of the sector. Nzomo (1995) buttress other feasible factors affecting women participation in management positions include inadequate training and its process, inadequate formal education and training, absence of strong women’s movement such as pressure group and networking, and of course, absence of government’s policy framework to support women’s advancement. These inadequacies in training process and formal education amongst others are reasons for scarcity of women in work organizations in general and also scarcity of women in top management positions. These gaps can only be filled with women found and engaged in continuous training in relevant disciplines, skills and networking to fully compete with their male counterparts.

Current Status of Women and Decision Making in Corporate Organizations

There are several critiques on the current status of women in management, as well as participating in the decision making process. Such academic research is beginning to attract the attention of research in developing countries like Nigeria and this is one of the reasons why this study intends to add to existing literatures. One notable issue is influencing the current status of women that debar them from participation decision making is the role of family and its relative impact on women’s competing demands and the continued pressure on women to perform dual roles, as individuals in work organizations and as mothers (Hoobler, Lemmon and Wayne, 2011). These acts of mixed roles and the consequential influence on decision making are still very common in developing countries like Nigeria with which government policies in this part of the world are struggling to deal with gender issues, especially at the work place (Matanmi, 2007).

Strategies and Policies used in Eradicating Gender Discrimination in Corporate Organizations

Several strategies and policies have been put in place for the purpose of eradicating gender discrimination and glass ceiling and same have also being put in place to improve participation of women in management position and decision-making in general both in Nigeria and globally yet the phenomenon of low participation of women in management position remains unresolved in corporate organizations (Eisner and Harvey, 2009; Adedokun, 1998; Lodiaga and Mbevi, 1995).
The fourth world Conference on women in Beijing retold 69% of these strategies. Yet, strategies advanced by the global forums tend to be too general, disregarding the specific difficulties in independent nations. One instance in this regard is their failure to directly address the formal education system. “Involvement strategies commonly suggested include improved women’s participation in education at all levels so as to raise the number of women from which able managers could progress; articulating equal opportunity policies, changing the environment in which women work, and the attitudes towards educated women, flexibility in working hours, and reviewing of staffing and promotion policies in the world of work (Poskitt 1998, UNESCO 1994, Dines 1993). These strategies in Nigeria were not fully welcomed and where it worked, it was not monitored by relevant authorities such as captains of industries and the Government being the largest employer of labour. All these, if implemented should also be monitored and enforced that employers of labour are actively involved and result-oriented with the primary objectives.

For instance, strategies specific to Kenya according to Nzomo (1995) advocates that there is the pressing need to create programmes combining gender sensitization, legal awareness raising and civil education of both the female and male genders with a view to eliminate deteriorating socio-cultural attitudes and values, as well as democratizing the society. The study underscored the importance of women’s self-empowerment through their own organizations and through more effective networking that cuts across class, political and socio-economic divides (Nzomo, 1995). There is no doubt that women generally have been stereotyped and reviews of related literature had shown that women are indeed discriminated against in management positions. Nevertheless, this conclusion from review of the literature is subjected to qualitative descriptive analysis which is used with the aid of verbal summary generated from the interview.

Methodology

This paper adopted a descriptive survey method to examine women in management positions in Guaranty Trust Bank Plc, Lagos, Nigeria. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 15 participants from five headquarters of Guaranty in Lagos. The Interview Guide or structured interview question contained twenty (20) items reflecting issues concerning women in management positions within the corporate organizations in Nigeria. Five (5) questions were developed for each of the objective. This is done against the four objectives, making up twenty research questions in all. The instrument consisted sections ‘A’ to ‘E’. Section “A” contained bio-data while Section “B” sought information on extent of women participation in management positions in corporate organizations. Section “C” centred around factors that influence gender discrimination against women participation in management position in corporate organizations with reference to Guaranty Trust Bank Plc while section D focuses on the current status of women in decision making in corporate organizations. An open-ended question was also provided for participant(s) to freely express their views which were not covered in the closed-ended questions. In summary, the study aimed to capture extent of women participation in managerial positions in banks, factors which influence gender discrimination against women in management positions, current status of women and decision making strategies and policies to eradicate gender discrimination and glass ceiling (i.e. limitation to career advancement). Based on the results of the analysis of the data collected, conclusion was drawn.

Results and Discussion

This paper involves the presentation and analysis of data gathered from the field survey. Some data were coded to transfer responses into numeric figures so as to allow for a statistical analysis. For the purpose of illustration, the statistical presentation showed the number of male and female gender involved in the study. The statistical analysis also showed the age brackets of the respondents. Therefore, a total of nine (9) women and six (6) men were involved in the interview. Hence, data were collected based on the examination of women in management positions in corporate organization. Data analysis is aimed at organizing, arranging and interpreting data collected from the field in a manner that is comprehensible so that the relationship between variables can be discussed in order to determine the validity of the study.

Extent of Women Participation in Managerial Positions in Corporate Organizations

Demanding the current situation regarding women participation in managerial positions in work organization; the question was responded to via interviews with male and women staff members. With the aid of coding technique, the inference drawn from the study revealed that women were either missing or not represented from management positions of in this part of the world. Notably, one of the respondents exemplified that she was part of similar research, carried out to know why women were not represented in the top management positions, part of the result according to her revealed that: “In Nigeria, very few women who are engaged in work usually attain the managerial
positions”. Usually, women were found to be managing positions customarily considered feminine in Africa such as secretary’s jobs, nursing, and in the University, you have them as either deans of students, librarians and majorly school with departments of Home Science, you often finds women to be the head of department of Food and Nutrition and so on”. On a general note, a male respondent also add that “women seemed to fare better in terms of leading departments in private establishment rather than in public ones”. This may be buttressed in two ways; firstly, female gender tends to have motherly and caring attitude towards issues, especially in the workplace. Secondly, it has been a customary phenomenon in African and in Nigeria in particular, for women to attain managerial positions or to take a leading role in the public sector, for the simple reason of being a “female gender” and another reason of the patriarchal belief system.

In addition, some of the respondents’ responses were summed up that women or female gender have been lowered and considered as secondary, particularly in the African setting (Bamgbose, 2009). While some respondents affirmed that women are denied access to both honoured and utilitarian role open only to male gender. Buttressing this views, Hora (2014) stress that such roles as administration and disposal of property, leadership roles in societal affairs including religion and governance are wholly belong to male gender. Responding to the role traps that has happened or exist in managerial positions for women, many of the respondents felt uncomfortable to respond while some of them were sceptical in addressing the issue. When it was noticed that they (respondents) purposely avoiding the question, the interviewer asked further is has ever happened before they joined the organization. One of them secretly said they there were role traps for managerial position in the past in the organization and she could not mention the traps.

Requesting to know the personal experience women have on gender stereotype in corporate organizations, virtually all the women agreed that they had one experience or the other; it was however gathered from five of the female workers that although gender stereotype has clearly influence the ability of women to succeed in traditional male arenas and professional careers today. This form of stereotyping has given way to gender discrimination in the workplace (Hora, 2014).

Results gathered from four male respondents revealed that they were against the notion that women do not easily attain managerial positions, while the remaining eleven respondents revealed that in most sensitive organization, it is very difficult for women to get to top management positions or decision-making level. In Nigeria, for example, where the society is extremely infiltrated by the male ideology, which of course, profits men as bread winners and women as their dependent, the result of which is difficult to see a woman becoming managers or participate in any managerial positions. Even the very few women, who probably via hard work, education and determination rise to the position of managing director, are restricted to relevant departments within the organizations where women are expected to function as stereotypes (Bamgbose, 2009).

Whether genders have equal opportunities to advance into management positions, the summary viewpoint from the respondents, especially from the women revealed that a lot of organizations and employers believe they would be suffering most cost if they engage women, investments such as training and development and the present positions hold by them may seem waste once they go on maternity leave. Of course, the company bears the cost of replacing such female gender and money spent on the training also becomes wasted. This factor also militates against the employment of women in the organized labour sector and also in management position and once women are engaged they do not give them equal opportunities with their male counterparts to advance to management positions.

Other responses gathered showed that most organizations in Nigeria today see no reason why they should use a particular female employee for ten (10) to eighteen (18) weeks or more and then pay maternity grants as well as incur extra-cost to get a temporary worker to replace the permanent once. Subsequently, this is one of the reasons, why we have very few women who aspire to attain or participate in management positions compared with their male counterparts.

Lines (2009) frowned on attitude and have described denial of job opportunity because of pregnancy as illegal gender discrimination. Nine, out of the total population adds comments requesting why there are few women in management positions as compared with their male counterpart that women’s absence from work due to personal problems, illness, death in the family also disheartens their employers and prevents them from employing more female workers.

Responses summed up from all respondents showed that employers have attempted to provide justification for occupational segregation by sex, by quoting the various labour laws and regulations as protective legislation which of course, truly, sometimes prohibits women from working in certain employments. This is exemplified as “women
may be prohibited from working underground in mines (see underground work (NigeriaLabour Acts); women may be prohibited from right work see the provision of the ILO’s right work (women convention) 1919 (no 4), women are prohibited from carrying heavy loads (see the maximum weight convention 1967 (NigeriaLabour Acts) and so on”.

Factors Influencing Gender Discrimination Against Women In Management Positions

Virtually all the female workers affirm that they had encountered some one form or the other of sexual harassment, both in the former and present organizations. Some of them could not share their experience while some with depression written all over their faces boldly asked me to skip to the question on the list.

Whether there may be some structures within the organization which may likely prevent or help their chances for promotion to managerial positions, results from majority of respondents (i.e. twelve) show that there are obvious various structures, noting such factors as academic qualification, administrative experience or management skills (which sometime, automatically disqualifies women out-rightly because women have not been giving such opportunities to cross the managerial ladder), hard work and diligence were found to enhance women’s participation in management positions. Other responses found that, absence of these attributes were said to restrict women’s confidence in applying for managerial positions.

Responding to the question that if the selection process, appointment, as well as promotion practices were also seem as stumbling structures influencing women’s participation in management positions in Nigeria as a whole. This does not leave out any sector of the economy. With frustration, a woman stood up suddenly, forgetting that people were around the office and screamed “Yes! There are structures and there would continue to be, if organizations don’t change their ways… We have been neglected for a long time. In fact, these people (employer of labour) would not change, no matter what”. She later affirmed that in some instances, the labour policies were not clearly documented women’s participation in management positions; in fact, “some of them” openly discriminated against us (i.e. women).

In the same vein, a majority of the respondents submit that composition of the selection process, appointment, promotion and other related welfare committees was also found to be dominantly of men with no genuine spaces earmarked for female workers. Again, the general notion that employers in African setting segregate male workers from their female counterparts had already discriminated women in such committees handling sensitive human resource areas (appointment, promotion and welfare packages) amongst others.

One of the male respondents, 26 and single responded in favour of women. “He said the environment in which women worked was generally not very supportive including his Mum. Some of the corporate practices such as timing of meetings in his Mum’s workplace were often found to be insensitive to women managers’ needs. He explained further that the timing of meetings had cost some of the women in the study their marriages, as his Dad could stand his Mum’s coming home very late or, and attendance of meetings at weekends. The male respondent concluded that the selection process, the prerequisites for appointments and promotions were are generally prejudicial to the female gender who, of course, probably because of academic qualifications amongst other related pre-requisites. For instance, the pre-requisite of a Ph.D holder and a decade length of service in the same position placed in job advert are done purposely to discriminate against the female gender.

A majority of the respondents confirmed that they found some aspects of their job most challenging. A few of the female gender said they did not encounter any obstacles on the way to their current position. In fact, some of the barriers faced were time management, family responsibilities and lack of confidence. In summary, responses show that family responsibilities were the major challenges faced by most women, particularly in top management positions. This, of course, would not allow any employers to welcome the presence of women in technical and sensitive areas, as this may disrupt the smooth running of the organizations.

Responses from a majority of the members and staff of Guaranty Trust Bank Plc revealed that women are still underrepresented in managerial positions, not to talk of being involved in top management positions in Nigeria. This is identified clearly in an interview with some member staff of the study area. She affirmed that gender stereotypes are definite beliefs concerning the traits and behavioural features attributed to workers on the basis of their gender and this is why most women find it very hard to get ahead with their career advancement. These stereotypes serve as expectations about the characteristics and behaviours of individual workers and are considered one of the direct signs of discrimination at work (Dovidio&Helb, 2005).
Requesting whether work-family conflict is seen as a major factor influencing gender discrimination against women in management positions, the summary of the responses from the respondents revealed that it is only the leading or big organizations who have a wide range of programmes aimed at reducing the challenges of balancing work and family obligations. A majority of the respondents however confirmed that Guaranty Trust Bank Plc had not experienced any work-family conflict. This showed that there has been the practice of segregation or gender discrimination at the point of entry or perhaps, certain rules and regulations has been met between the management and female workers. The common rule is that women are not allowed to be pregnant within the first-three years of engagement and this happens in most our commercial banks.

Although, some big banks have flexible work options with reduced numbers of hours spent at work; while some have shifting opportunities. However, on a general note, most corporate organizations chase some of their female genders away as a result of work-family conflict. In other words, discriminating against women in management positions is very rampant, especially in the financial institutions. Some of the respondents add that “corporate organizations in this part of the continent take women as slaves; they want us to die, marketing their business where we also experience sexual harassment by both customers and the management crew”.

**Current Status of Women and Decision Making**

Addressing the reasons for women that are qualified being hindered to make decisions in the organization, selected male respondents says that most women themselves have been accused of being their own enemies due to low education. The respondents place emphasis on improve their status and this could only be done by education at all levels. Other female respondents submit that apart from education, networking among women, administrative and academic training and empowerment of women needs to be enhanced to bridge the gaps between male and female genders and that the existing structures need to be re-engineered to achieve the set target. Female bankers were also advised to be self-confident and aggressive in all ramifications, so as to get management positions by some of the respondents.

One of the respondents who is a male gender said, “Women should assert themselves by honorably and aggressively participating in all aspects of work-life and should not have that feeling that men are not giving them the opportunity”. He said the more they about such issue, the more depressed they become. Requesting to share with the interviewer on how women manage to balance their home and work responsibilities, most of the respondents (i.e. women) quickly jumped with the phrase “house-help” while some of them said “my mother is there for me” and some with “grand-ma”.

Many of the female respondents avoid such question as to what they think if some women are not engaged for management positions because a female gender may take a significant amount of time off which may hurt the organization. Rather than giving straight answers, the female respondents say time can be managed and work responsibilities would be affected. The women respondents shy away from the reality of leaving the organization, especially for maternity related issues. They enjoyed complaining of gender discrimination and how work organizations give preference to their male counterparts. Only few of them accepted the fact that significant amount of time can be taken off for reasons when they are pregnant and other maternity related leaves. The remaining six male respondents supported the notion that female gender may take a significant amount of time off which may hurt the organization. Eventually, the male respondents showed total support gender discrimination.

Providing answers to whether women in corporate organizations have mentoring opportunities with fellow women in management positions, virtually all the respondents confirmed that they have very few women in management positions in the company. Some of the respondents gave statistics of just two women, with one, already made inactive. They actually recommend that the top male managers or executives and mentors aspiring female managers, both parties stand to benefit.

**Strategies and Policies to Eradicate Gender Discrimination and Glass Ceiling (i.e. Limitation to Career Advancement)**

Having established that women are few in management positions under study and that there are some factors influencing their participation in management, the researcher tried, through interviews, to establish whether there were any interventions put in place to enhance the participation of women in management.

The male managers were asked whether they were satisfied with the current ratio of women to men in top management in their organization. Some of the male respondents said they were satisfied and some other male respondents said they were not. The male respondents who affirmed satisfaction were asked to state reasons.
Responses obtained shows that the core reason for the satisfaction was the fact that women get into those positions on merit and through competition with their male counterparts. Those who affirmed dissatisfaction were asked what they were doing to readdress the disparity. The majority said they were doing nothing, while some said they were encouraging women to go for further studies.

Personal experience question was asked on how glass ceiling or gender discrimination should be eradicated. A majority of the female gender request the Nigerian government to find lasting solutions to the problem of glass ceiling or discrimination. Some respondents said measures had been implemented but to no avail. All the respondents were later asked to propose strategies that would be backed with sanctions against gender discrimination. Subsequently, the responses showed that the socio-cultural attitudes towards female workers have been found to have a big impact on the access women have to education, employment and other facilities. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Mutindi-Mumbua (2001) who argue that “providing women with more education without changing the gender and power structures that reinforce and continue gender discriminations, will not facilitate their access to educational, employment level to those of their male counterparts”.

When asked if government should device a strategic policy to check corporate organizations for the implementation, all respondents including male respondents agreed to the notion, while some of the female respondents demand of Nigerian government to also device strategic policy(ies) that supports seminars and workshops for all staff in equal proportion of male and female members. Such policies should allow for promotions to be done on merit, while offering scholarship for women staff, affirmative action and developing equal opportunity policies. This further shows that the existing policies are not effective or perhaps, they are not well-implemented.

Responses gathered shows that there were various policies that has already been formulated by government, which is expected to play a substantial role in facilitating, conditions to speeding up of equality between men and women in order to let female gender participate in the socio-economic and political life. It was also gathered that women participation in management position, and decision making, as well as their benefits of development on equal basis with their male counterparts should be emphasized in the content of such policies, which everyone must be aware of. This is a way of bringing the policy’s objective in to reality.

**Recommendations**

Corporate organizations require both genders and not the male gender; any of the genders could rise, up to the top level management and no one should be discriminated against. Women should not be denied access to both honoured and utilitarian role that is open only to male gender. Hora (2014) stress that such roles as administration and disposal of property, leadership roles in societal affairs including religion and governance are wholly belong to male gender and this should be balanced between the genders.

Employers of labour and the Government in general, as the largest employer of labour should put a stop to the role traps that has happened or which exists in managerial positions for women, rather opportunities can be given to women, the benefits of which, may bring diversity, better performance, equality and of course, utility of all necessary and available resources and technology know-how that will contribute towards achieving the set targets of the organization.

It is a known fact, that in Nigeria, for example, the society is extremely infiltrated by the male ideology, which profits men as bread winners and women as their dependent, the result of which is difficult to see a woman becoming managers or participate in any managerial positions can still be reversed. Women can be of importance to the family too. They can be given opportunity to participate in management positions and lead for better performance. Equal opportunities to advance into management positions should be balanced between genders to achieving the core objectives of the organization.

**Conclusion**

Women are really missing or discriminate from participating in management positions in corporate organizations. Building on the data gathered in this paper, the female gender were often found to be managing rather participate in management positions. The emphasis is that women manage certain positions customarily considered feminine and this has been the tradition in African and Nigeria in particular. Such professions include the job of a secretary, nursing, teaching, Librarian, or being the head of Home Economics, Home Science, Food and Nutrition and the likes. Buttressing these facts, Fapohunda (2011) affirms that women are the principal producers of food, the managers of household resources, and the custodians of family welfare. The author however submits women’s participation in the formal sector employment in Nigeria is low (Fapohunda, 2011). This is consistent with the work
of Bamgbose (2009) as he confirms that even the very few women, who probably through hard work, education and of course, determination, try to rise to the position of managing director, are restricted to relevant departmental positions within the organization, where women are expected to function as stereotypes. In some organizations, such women can also be played out totally.

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