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Organisational Culture and Female Leadership Position in Manufacturing Firms in South-South of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of organizational culture on female leadership positions in manufacturing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria. The research explored how shared values, norms, and practices within organizations shape leadership opportunities for women and addresses the challenges posed by gender disparities and cultural biases. Utilizing Social Capital Theory, the study highlights the role of bonding and bridging social networks in empowering women to navigate organizational hierarchies. The cross sectional research design was used as the design adopted for the study using the survey method. A sample of 306 was obtained from a population of 1308. Multistage sampling method was used to select the respondents that participated in the survey. The questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. A reliability score of $r^2 = 0.78$ was obtained which showed a strong reliability value. Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique was used to run the analysis. Descriptive data were analysed using frequency and percentage and the hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique. The findings reveal that in many firms in the South-South zone, leadership positions remain predominantly male-dominated, hindering the career progression of women. It was recommended that manufacturing firms should prioritize gender diversity in leadership roles to create a more inclusive environment for female employees. This can be achieved by implementing policies that encourage the promotion of qualified women into management positions. These insights emphasize the importance of organizational culture in shaping leadership dynamics and call for targeted interventions to create an enabling environment for female leaders in South-South Nigeria.

Keywords: Organisational culture, Female, Leadership position, Manufacturing Firms, South-South, Nigeria.

Introduction

Organizational culture plays a critical role in shaping leadership dynamics, particularly for women in leadership positions. It encompasses the shared values, norms, and practices that guide behaviors within an organization, influencing decision-making, employee relationships, and career progression opportunities (Daft & Marcic, 2021). In the South-South region of Nigeria, the manufacturing sector is a significant economic driver, yet organizational cultures in this industry often reflect broader societal norms that reinforce gender disparities. This context creates unique challenges for women aspiring to and occupying leadership roles, as they must navigate cultural and structural barriers that limit their influence and opportunities (Okon & Effiong, 2023).

Theoretical frameworks, such as Social Dominance Theory (SDT), help illuminate the structural inequalities that permeate organizational culture and hinder female leadership. SDT posits that social hierarchies are maintained through cultural ideologies and institutional practices, often favoring dominant groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 2020). In the manufacturing firms of South-South Nigeria, these hierarchies frequently marginalize women, constraining their leadership potential and reinforcing male-dominated organizational structures. Research shows that these cultural dynamics contribute to gender biases in decision-making processes, mentorship opportunities, and resource allocation (Akpan & Etim, 2022).

Female leaders often rely on networking and relationship-building as strategies to overcome these barriers. However, the effectiveness of these approaches is significantly influenced by the organizational culture. A patriarchal or hierarchical culture may undermine women's networks and limit their access to power and resources, whereas inclusive cultures foster collaboration and equitable opportunities for leadership development (Ekanem & Akpan, 2022). This dual dynamic is evident in the South-South region, where some firms have begun to adopt more progressive practices, while others remain entrenched in traditional gender norms (Usoro et al., 2022).

Despite these challenges, research indicates that organizations that prioritize gender diversity in leadership reap significant benefits, including enhanced innovation, improved decision-making, and greater financial performance (Cameron & Quinn, 2022). Manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria have the potential to unlock these advantages by cultivating inclusive cultures that support female leaders. Policies that promote mentorship, equitable resource distribution, and gender-sensitive training programs are critical for creating an environment where women can thrive in leadership roles (Okon & Effiong,

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2023). Additionally, dismantling cultural narratives that uphold gender hierarchies is essential for achieving long-term equity and organizational success (Akpan & Etim, 2022).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine organization culture and leadership position in manufacturing firms in South-South of Nigeria. The study specifically intends to:

1. Determine the influence of organizational culture on female leadership position in manufacturing organisations in the South-South of Nigeria

Research Hypotheses

 There is no significant relationship between organizational culture and female leadership position in manufacturing organisations in the South-South of Nigeria

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Organisation culture

Organisation culture is a different kind of culture. It is obtained by the communicative processes arising between organisation members and work environment which is influenced by certain habits. It is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration which has worked well enough to be considered valid. Cui and Hu (2012) opine that the basic assumption of culture is taken for granted, invisible and preconscious. To be sure, in the qualitative analysis, especially in the distinction of strong cultures and weak cultures, these claims would come in handy.

Osibanjo and Adeniji (2013) conceptualize culture as shared beliefs and values within workplaces that assist to mould employees' behaviour patterns. It presents drive which recognizes the efforts and contributions of members of the organizations and provides detailed understanding of what and how to achieve the goals, how goals are interrelated, and how each employee could attain goals. Osibanjo and Adeniji (2013) summarize organization culture as collective process of the mind that differentiates the members of one group from the other one. Thus, it can be deduced from above definitions that organizational culture could be the means of keeping employees in line and acclimatizing them towards organizational objectives. They recognize the link between culture and organizational excellent performances via its human resource development programmes.

Organisational cultural values and human resource development programmes are in line with strategies chosen by organizations which lead to the success of such organizations. The organizational culture is overall phenomenon of the organization such as natural settings, the rite and rituals, climate, values and programmes of the company e.g. performance management, training and development, recruitment and selection, etc. Culture is deeply associated with values and beliefs shared by personnel in an organization (Alidou, 2017).

Concept of Leadership

Leadership is as old as human civilization. The early written principles of leadership can be found in the Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs for leadership, leader and follower, and Instruction of Ptah-Hotep, followed by the Chinese works of Confucius and Lao-tzu and the classical Greek and Roman writers, such as Plato and Marcus Aurelius (Bass & Bass, 2019). Leadership was defined by Keating (2012) as the process of facilitating the goal achievement of an individual or of a group in a particular situation. Bass (cited in Bass, 2019) refer to it as an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members. It is seen as art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations (Kouzes & Posner, 2015). Koestenbaum (2012) sees it as a way of thinking and a way of acting...an attitude, a mind-set" On the other hand, De Pree, (2014) defined it as an art, something to be learned over time...is more tribal than scientific, more a weaving of relationships than an amassing of information.

Riggio, (2017) conceptualized it as looking beyond the everyday management of people to creating a vision for the collective, developing strategy, inspiring and motivating, and making key decisions. Rosenbach, Taylor and Youndt, (2018) say it is all about getting people to work together to make things happen that might not otherwise occur or to prevent things from happening that would ordinarily take place. Bratton (2020) on the other hand opined that it is an influencing process occurring both directly and indirectly among others within formal employment relations. Haslam, Reicher and Platow (2020) define it as having to do with achieving influence, not securing compliance

Gendered nature of Organization

No organization has a very significant advantage for women in terms of work culture. The social environment of any organization is more masculine in nature as it is traditionally and predominantly occupied by men. The earlier gendered management style debate had the view that the characteristics of a successful manager is due to the characteristics of men (Schein, Mueller, & Jacobson, 2019). As the entry of female managers increases, they adopt traits and behaviors typical of male managers in order to succeed in a masculine work environment. This is one of the barriers faced by women when they enter

any organization for a leadership role. They "fail" to gain inclusion as they are evaluated in a work culture set up by men which has typical male standards and criteria. There is substantial advantage to men in military and police. The roles of these organizations were found to be particularly masculine as they are dominated traditionally by males on a numerical basis (Arkin & Dobrofsky, 2018). Women also have such substantial advantage in organizations like education and social service. Teaching is perceived as aligning with their family role. Research and publication becomes mandatory to excel in academics. But when compared to men, women academicians are traditionally less published (Priola, 2017) as women are still expected to bear the major responsibility for the nurturing of children.

A women leader when performing a leadership role, tends to reduce her gender stereotype (feminine traits) in order to survive. It reduces the role conflict. Otherwise, she invites prejudice in the form of biased performance evaluations and negative preconceptions which may diminish her performance (Miller & Turnbull, 2016). Male leaders are at an advantage compared to female leaders in terms of prejudices (Eagly & Carli, 2017). This role adjustment has an impact on women's health. When they work in their traditional style (interpersonally oriented), they have not complained of any pressure or mental health ill whereas they feel mentally ill when they need to alter their leadership style (Gardiner & Tiggemann, 2019). This need to alter their leadership style arises when they work in male dominant industries such as military. Masculine organization (such as military and police) differ from other organizations because male leaders are favored in such organizations and the roles of military or police officers are highly masculine in nature. The feminine gender characteristics are in sharp contrast to the skill requirements of masculine organizations. To be a successful cadet in masculine organizations, women are expected to possess typical masculine gender characteristics (Francke, 2017).

Those women who have worked in the other male dominant industries (automotive and timber) also stated that they were task oriented where as those in female dominant industries (beauty parlor, education and nursing) said that they were interpersonally oriented, Generally women who choose military as career adopt the military culture (male dominant) and fit in to survive by compromising in the female style of leadership. Those who are unable to adapt, leave the organization. Adaptations create homogenous organizational culture and minimize diversity (Kelley, 2017). Herbert (2018) describes how women in military adopt an 'in between role' or blending strategy (not too feminine and not too masculine). In terms of appearance and self-presentation, they meet their gender expectations and in terms of work situations they are competent, rational and impersonal. Thus they try to perform better without any compromise on their gender role. A finding closer to this was found in the study of Israel's women police force. They had a role conflict of "feminine and inappropriate (for organizational role)" or "unfeminine and atypical (of gender)". They did not reject their gender identity. Rather they adjusted their gender identity by including selected masculine traits which are not in conflict with traditional feminine attributes (assertive, independent, dominant) and by reducing selected feminine traits (shy, soft spoken, warm and gullible) which are considered as hindrance to performing their organizational roles (Moore, & Gobi, 2015).

Thus, women, though they are transformational in nature, wherever the situation requires, they adopt masculine characteristics. Eagly and Carli (2013), in their updated meta-analysis found more support for this claim. They state that contemporary context demands both masculine and feminine gender characteristics (mentoring, collaboration, cooperation) of leadership. This was termed as "Androgynous identity" (Bem, 2017) which is a blending of male (dominance, assertiveness and competitiveness) and female styles (collaborative, cooperativeness and concern for people). Androgynous individuals are more independent and nurturing (Bem, 2017), have high self-esteem, and have successful social skills with social poise and intellect (Berzing, Welling & Wetter, 2018). They have higher involvement in academic competitions. Hence Androgynous identity is preferred as it facilitates them to express either 'instrumental' or 'expressive' behavior, depending on the demands of the situation. Adopting an androgynous leadership style may help women to overcome gender stereotypes that have prevented them from being viewed as leaders in the past (Kelley, 2017). Moreover women perceive their leadership role as androgynous (both agnetic and communal) compared to men.

Organisation culture and Women Career Progression to Leadership Position

The World Travel & Tourism Council WTTC (2020) report revealed that the tourism sector had 10% of the total world employment in 2018 with 10.4 % of the global gross domestic product (GDP) and 319 million jobs. Women accounted for 54% of the total workforce while earning 14.7% less than men and holding less than one fifth of the leadership roles in the tourism industry (United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), (2019). Africa has the highest proportion of women in senior management, with almost two fifths (38%) of executive roles in the region being held by females (Thornton 2016). In addition, research from McKinsey, (2019) found that Rwanda and South Africa have increased women's representation in middle management roles by 27% and 15% respectively. The current global average of women board directors stands at 23.3%, up from 20.4% in 2018. Kenya has done better than this with 36% in 2021 up from 21% in 2017. However, most women in the hotel industry are employed in unskilled and low-paid jobs. The representation of women dwindles to around 21% at the executive level probably because of the cultural beliefs of the employees. These culture beliefs include gender bias, leadership styles and gender stereotypes. Such cultural beliefs in Kenyan hotels could be a gender barrier against women career advancement. Once addressed at the hotel workplace there would be a better working environment for women which, in-turn would unlock the full potential of women working in the hotels and thereby foster improved economic growth in (Mwakio, 2021).

According to the Women Matter Africa (2016), women in the hospitality sector are yet to receive the same privileges, opportunities and rights as their male counterparts. In the Kenyan hospitality industry, gender occupational segregation is notable, both horizontally where women and men take up different types of jobs and vertically where women remain at the lower-level positions (Mwakio, 2021). Women in hospitality and tourism are more likely to be undertaking part-time, informal, seasonal, agency, and casual work (ILO, 2017). Women should be represented in the hospitality sector as envisioned in the new Constitution (2010) article 27(3) (Domingo et al., 2016). This article stipulates that women should constitute 30% of all leadership positions in the country. It also emphasizes that gender equality should be demonstrated by not less than one third representation of either gender in public appointments. The culture beliefs that hindering women career advancement are double blind gender biases and prevailing leadership styles which come

from gender stereotypes, social norms and societal expectations. A set of widely shared conscious and unconscious mental associations supported by society's attachment to these cultural myths of masculine authority, dominance and ambition, still shape people's ideas on leadership (Carli & Eagly, 2016). Prevailing leadership styles in the hotels have associated masculinity with authority. Managerial skills and leadership skills are also linked with men rather than women.

Literature review shows that prevailing leadership styles prevent women from finding their way to the top. Women and men are often seen as having different leadership styles, with certain traits labeled as feminine and others masculine. According to Ryan et al., (2016), being male is associated with leadership while the converse is the case for the attributes of a female. Subsequently, having been created by and for men, hotel organisational systems, structures, processes, and practices are imbued with norms that reflect masculine values, experiences, and life situations O'Neil et al., (2018). It is evident that a set of widely shared conscious and unconscious mental associations supported by society's attachment to these cultural myths of masculine authority, dominance and ambition still shape people's ideas on leadership (Carli & Eagly, 2016). It is not surprising then that according to Khan, (2017) in a Women Matter's survey revealed that, close to 40% of women believed that the prevailing leadership styles in their organizations are incompatible with women's communication and leadership styles.

Gender Stereotypes Gender stereotypes largely explain the inequalities within leadership. Gender is a social construct loaded with norms, expectations and prescribed traits (Casaca & Lortie, 2017). Society is more resistant to applying influence when managers are female than it is for males. Furthermore managerial skills are usually predominantly associated with men rather than women. Women are required to tactfully blend toughness with warmth to be regarded as credible leaders, whereas this is not necessarily so for men. Women are typically viewed as more emotional and sensitive. Showing emotions can be negatively perceived in the workplace as having less leadership effectiveness (Brescoll, 2016). In the research of Thornton (2016), women are calling for change from the old leadership of the "alpha male" approach to embracing new ways of leadership that value inclusion, listening to views of others, allowing questions to be asked and collaborating to find the best solutions to problems. While men may receive hotel job offers within more comfortable circumstances—beneficiaries of the glass cushion—women with fewer paths to the top may be more motivated to seize problematic opportunities. Furthermore, for most women, it seems that gender stereotypes are stubborn; change is slow, subtle and constantly negotiated (Cole, 2018). Constraints to women does not end at these hotel cultural beliefs but rather go beyond to the other areas of the work environment. For this reason, hotel employees should for instance also be ready to look into the hotel practice challenges that do not allow successful women to advance in their careers.

Theoretical Framework

Social Capital Theory provides a useful lens to understand how organizational culture influences female leadership in manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. This theory emphasizes the value of social networks and relationships in facilitating access to resources, information, and opportunities (Putnam, 2000). In male-dominated organizational cultures, the networks that are most influential often exclude women, limiting their access to the social capital necessary for leadership roles (Akpan & Etim, 2022). Conversely, inclusive organizational cultures that prioritize diversity can enhance women's social capital by fostering supportive networks and mentorship programs.

Female leaders often rely on both bonding and bridging social capital to navigate organizational hierarchies. Bonding social capital refers to the relationships within a homogeneous group, such as women's networks within an organization. These networks provide emotional support and a platform for collective advocacy but may lack influence in male-centric cultures (Bourdieu, 1986). Bridging social capital, on the other hand, involves connections across diverse groups, enabling women to access resources and opportunities beyond their immediate network. Inclusive organizational cultures facilitate the development of bridging social capital by encouraging collaboration and equitable participation in decision-making processes (Iyangbe & Omoruyi, 2021).

Empirical studies highlight the interplay between social capital and organizational culture in shaping leadership opportunities. Research by Usoro et al. (2022) indicates that women in manufacturing firms with inclusive cultures are more likely to occupy leadership positions and leverage their social networks effectively. In contrast, firms with hierarchical and patriarchal cultures often undermine the social capital of female employees, perpetuating gender disparities. By fostering an organizational culture that values diversity and inclusion, manufacturing firms can enhance the social capital of female leaders, thereby improving organizational performance and innovation (Cameron & Quinn, 2022).

Materials and Method

The study employed the cross sectional research design. This design is most appropriate and suitable for this study since it seeks to understand the frequency of the occurrence of a phenomenon (organisation culture and female career growth) over a period of time across a population with varying demographic features. The population of the study is 1,570 manufacturing firms and was obtained from states in South-South Nigeria. The table below shows the population figure. The sample size of the study was obtained by using Taro Yamane sample size formula and this result was 306 manufacturing firms. The multi-stage sampling method was used to select the manufacturing firms that participated in the survey from the study area. Using this method, the states were clustered into three groups using former administration before their division. The researcher purposively selected three states making the criteria of proximity and convenience of administration of data, and this resulted in the selection of Delta, Edo and Rivers. Furthermore, one manufacturing firm was selected from each of the senatorial districts in the selected states for equitable and proportionate representation. This constituted the target population from which the study survey was conducted. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled organisation culture and female networking in manufacturing firms in South-South of Nigeria. The face and content validity measures was used for the study and Kudder Richards method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as

frequency counts and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test hypothesis to ascertain the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the study if they are correlated linearly or not.

Results and Discussion

This chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of data collected in the field using structured questionnaires. Respondents were given 306 copies of the questionnaire in total. Only 289 of the 306 questionnaires distributed to respondents were returned entirely and precisely filled, while the remaining 17 survey were returned but not accurately filled. This means that 94.0% of the questionnaires were returned, while 6% were misplaced. The researcher presented the data and analyzed the research findings using the 289 questionnaire as the basis for data analysis.

4.1. Presentation and Analysis of Data

Distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the distribution of respondents' socio demographic characteristics.

Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	204	70.6
	Female	85	29,4
	Total	289	100.0
Age (years)	18-28	96	33
	29-39	156	54
	40 years and above	37	13
	Total	289	100.0
Religion	Christianity	188	65.1
	Islam	55	19.0
	African Traditional Religion	46	15.9
	Total	289	100.0
Single Married Divorced Total	Single	143	49.5
	Married	123	42.6
	Divorced	23	7.0
	Total	289	100.0
Educational Qualifications	Primary	25	8.7
	Secondary	42	14.5
	Higher education	222	76.8
	Total	289	100.0%
Type of manufacturing firm	Small scale	198	68.5
	Large scale	91	31.5
	Total	289	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The socio-demographic characteristics of those who took part in the survey are shown in table 4.1. 70.6 percent of the respondents were males, and 29.4 percent were females according to the gender distribution of the respondents. The age distribution of the survey participants shows that 33.0 percent are between the ages of 18-28 years, 54.0 percent are between the ages of 29-39 years, and 13.0 percent are 40 years, and above. The respondents marital status revealed that 65.1 percent of the respondents were Christians, 19.0 percent were Muslims and 15.9 percent were African Traditional Worshippers.

The respondents' educational qualifications revealed that 8.7 percent had a primary school certificate, 14.5 percent had a secondary school certificate, and 76.8 percent had a higher education certificate. The type of manufacturing firm distribution of the respondents revealed that 68.5 were small scale firm owners, and 31.5 percent were large scale firm owners.

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between organizational culture and promotion to female leadership position in manufacturing organisations in the South-South of Nigeria.

Table 2 Pearson test for the relationship between organizational culture and promotion to female leadership position in manufacturing organisations in the South-South of Nigeria

		Organizational culture	Promotion to female leadership position
Organizational culture	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	289	.194** .000 289
Promotion to female leadership position	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.194** .000 289	289

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From table 2, it can be observed that the Pearson correlation coefficient, r, is 0.194 and that it is significant at (p = 0.000). This means that the null hypothesis is rejected. In conclusion, there is a significant relationship between organizational culture and promotion to female leadership position in manufacturing organisations in the South-South of Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between organizational culture and promotion to female leadership position in manufacturing organisations in the South-South of Nigeria. This was based on the Pearson (r = 0.194, p. value = 0.000) result obtained which established a significant relationship. Extant literature from the work supports the findings above. Research from McKinsey, (2019) found that Rwanda and South Africa have increased women's representation in middle management roles by 27% and 15% respectively. Mwakio (2021) averted that the representation of women dwindles to around 21% at the executive level probably because of the cultural beliefs of the employees accounting for uneven representation and this supports the study finding.

According to the Women Matter Africa (2016), women in the hospitality sector are yet to receive the same privileges, opportunities and rights as their male counterparts. In the Kenyan hospitality industry, gender occupational segregation is notable, both horizontally where women and men take up different types of jobs and vertically where women remain at the lower-level positions (Mwakio, 2021). Women in hospitality and tourism are more likely to be undertaking part-time, informal, seasonal, agency, and casual work (ILO, 2017). Women should be represented in the hospitality sector as envisioned in the new Constitution (2010) article 27(3) (Domingo et al., 2016). This article stipulates that women should constitute 30% of all leadership positions in the country. It also emphasizes that gender equality should be demonstrated by not less than one third representation of either gender in public appointments. The culture beliefs that hindering women career advancement are double blind gender biases and prevailing leadership styles which come from gender stereotypes, social norms and societal expectations. A set of widely shared conscious and unconscious mental associations supported by society's attachment to these cultural myths of masculine authority, dominance and ambition, still shape people's ideas on leadership (Carli & Eagly, 2016). Prevailing leadership styles in the hotels have associated masculinity with authority. Managerial skills and leadership skills are also linked with men rather than women.

Conclusion

The research on organizational culture and female career growth within manufacturing firms in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria reveals critical insights into how organizational structures, cultural practices, and gender-focused initiatives shape the career trajectories of women. The study underscores the significant impact of leadership positions on female career growth. Manufacturing firms that prioritize gender diversity in leadership create pathways for women to rise through the ranks. Female representation at top management levels fosters an inclusive culture that values diverse perspectives and enables women to break through the "glass ceiling" However, in many firms in the South-South zone, leadership positions remain predominantly male-dominated, hindering the career progression of women.

Recommendation

Manufacturing firms should prioritize gender diversity in leadership roles to create a more inclusive environment for female employees. This
can be achieved by implementing policies that encourage the promotion of qualified women into management positions. Leadership training
and sponsorship programs should also focus on preparing women for executive roles.

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